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She's not just her father's daughter
THE EYE

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THE EYE

INDEPENDENT

Friday 20 March 1998 45p (IR50p) No 3,563

Newspaper of the Year for photographs

Rebuke for Blair over Ecclestone free trip

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

TONY BLAIR was formally censured by an all-party Commons committee yesterday for not registering a family visit to the British Grand Prix, at Silverstone, in July 1996.

The verdict from the Commons Committee on Standards and Privileges, that the visit should have been declared by the Register of Members' Interests, revived Labour embarrassment over last year's Formula One affair.

The Conservatives immediately condemned Mr Blair's "ranked hypocrisy", and demanded an apology from the Prime Minister in the Chamber of the Commons; a form of parliamentary punishment by ordeal that had not been proposed by the Standards and Privileges Committee.

But some senior MPs - Tony as well as Labour - last night turned on the committee, saying they would now feel compelled to register anything and everything, no matter how minor. One Labour critic said: "The whole machinery of Nolan was set up to catch rogues and rascals - not this tat and trivia."

But the committee issued a

further warning to all ministers and MPs. "This is not the first case of its kind," it reported, "and we draw the attention of the House to the importance of registering, or seeking the Registrar's advice, in any case where there may be any doubt."

Mr Blair told the committee that he had not registered the Silverstone trip because he had gone "as part of my duties as leader of the Labour Party, not as an opportunity to watch motor-racing - hence my departure soon after the start of the race".

However, it was conceded yesterday by Mr Blair's official spokesman that during the visit, he had met Formula One's Bernie Ecclestone, who was later to make a donation of £1m to Labour - leading to last year's controversy over government policy on tobacco sponsorship of the sport.

The judgement of Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, who acts as Westminster's special investigator, was that the visit should have been registered, and the committee unanimously upheld his view. "The rules applying at the time," Sir Gordon said, "required the registration of any hospitality exceeding £215 in value given to

a Member or a Member's spouse, which in any way related to membership of the House."

Andrew Robathan, the Conservative complainant, said the "cost" of the hospitality would have come to £600 for Mr and Mrs Blair. Sir Gordon upheld that view - "a value of over £300 per head" - adding that six other MPs who had been at Silverstone on the same day had registered the perk.

Sir Gordon said in his report that while there was "undoubtedly some confusion" over the principle of visits undertaken in an official capacity, Mr Blair was "mistaken".

The Prime Minister's official spokesman suggested the absurdity of the latest position, saying: "Every time William Hague goes to an agricultural show, does he have to declare the fact that it would have cost him £60 and, if he took his wife, £120?"

For the Tories, Francis Maude said: "Tony Blair is caught in a trap of his own making. While sermonising about the need for all politicians to comply with the rules both in letter and in spirit, he was breaking the rules himself. It is the ranked hypocrisy..."

Leading article, page 22

Never mind the Man in the Iron Mask, Leonardo was here



Scream: Fans waiting in Leicester Square for Leonardo DiCaprio - attending his latest film's London premiere last night Photograph: Kalpesh Lathiga

Willey lied, says her friend

By David Usborne

THE credibility of Kathleen Willey, the latest accuser in the Clinton sex saga, wilted yesterday when a friend said she had lied about the alleged incident - on Willey's urging.

Julie Hatt Steele said in an affidavit that Ms Willey had contacted her last spring and asked her to lie to a reporter from Newsweek magazine, Michael Isikoff, who was pursuing the story.

More specifically, Ms Steele said she was supposed to tell Mr Isikoff how Ms Willey had seen her on the day of the purported

encounter in November 1993 and how, in a state of great distress, she had related being groped and fondled by the President.

Yesterday's twist was an unexpected bonus for the White House which has done its own work to undermine Ms Willey, notably by releasing serial admiring letters sent by her to the President.

In an appearance on television last Sunday night, Ms Willey propelled the seagate affair into a new orbit with claims that the President imposed himself upon her outside the Oval Office, touched her breasts and asked her to feel his genitals.

The Steele revelation came in an affidavit given to lawyers in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case. It seems that she did indeed lie to Mr Isikoff when first interviewed by him but she withdrew what she said before Newsweek ran the story.

In the statement, Ms Steele said: "I told Ms Willey that I could not make such statements because she had not come to my house that day and had never told me of any sexual advances made by President Clinton."

"She [Willey] repeatedly assured me that any discussion with Mr. Isikoff would be 'off the record' and that it would be

all right if I lied to him. She told me she needed me to do this for her."

Further damaging Ms Willey's case, a supermarket tabloid said yesterday it had been approached by a lawyer trying to sell her story for \$300,000 (£184,000). Phil Burton, the editor of Star magazine, said talks broke off because he offered only \$50,000.

"We've been trying to persuade Kathleen Willey to talk to us for about six months now, and basically some time in the last month Mr Gecker [the lawyer] said she might talk for \$300,000," Mr Burton said.



Kathleen Willey's Credibility undermined by Julie Steele

Elton John asked by Sotheby's to return stolen sculpture

By Steve Boggan

ELTON JOHN has been asked to return a piece of an ancient Roman sarcophagus which he bought at auction following the discovery that it had been stolen.

Sir Elton bought the piece at Sotheby's in London four years ago for about £8,000 believing its provenance to be completely sound.

However, late last year the auction house contacted him to ask for the piece back when it emerged that the sale may not have been lawful. There is no suggestion that either party knew there was a problem with the piece, but the need for its

return has resulted in Sotheby's conducting a world-wide search to find a replacement for him. The singer bought the antiquity at auction on 8 December 1994. It is described in the sale catalogue as Lot 133: "A fragment from a Roman marble sarcophagus, circa 3rd-century AD."

A brief description continues: "With the figure of a horseman, a slain figure below, another figure on the corner, the scene would appear to represent an Amazonomachy [an Amazon battle]."

Measuring 59cm by 35.9cm (23 and a quarter ins by 14 and one-eighth ins), the catalogue estimated its value at between £6,000-£8,000.

It is understood that Sir Elton, a great collector of fine art, still displays the fragment in the drawing room of his home in Old Windsor and regards it as one of his favourite pieces. His representatives are co-operat-



The sarcophagus fragment Sir Elton will have to return

ing fully with Sotheby's officials who, in turn, are searching for a similar piece.

One dealer said a full refund had been offered by Sotheby's, but it was turned down in the hope that a similarly fine piece

could be found elsewhere. "He got more pleasure from the artefact than he ever could from the return of the money," said the dealer.

"The worst part about it was that last year was a terrible one for Sir Elton, with the loss of his friends Princess Diana and Gianni Versace. The last thing he needed was to have something else taken away from him."

Chris Proudlove, a spokesman for Sotheby's confirmed the fragment had been stolen. "It will be returned to its owner when a replacement can be found," he said. "We are working with Elton John's organisation to find a replacement as soon as possible."

Mr Proudlove declined to give details of the sale price, or a fuller description of the piece on the grounds of client confidentiality.

It is not known from whom the piece was stolen.

Today's news

Bell reunion
Martin Bell MP was yesterday reunited with his stepdaughter, a former prostitute and export star whom he has not seen for nine years. Page 5

Censorship fight
A university vice chancellor will tell colleagues today that he intends to place the university in conflict with the police in his fight against censorship. Page 3

Scrubs warning
An independent watchdog group has warned they were "seriously concerned" that "a few unrestrained officers" at Wormwood Scrubs may be abusing inmates. Page 2

Budget patience
Tony Blair made a plea for patience yesterday, when he and Gordon Brown met 250 people for a post-Budget question-and-answer session. Page 9

Beaver returns
The beaver could be returning to Scotland after being absent from the British Isles for more than 400 years. Page 13

Church drops stake in genetics company

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

The Church Commissioners have disposed of a £1.3m shareholding in a leading genetic engineering firm after protests that the investment was incompatible with Christian values. But they will still invest in an oil company accused of employing forced labour in Burma and two other genetic-engineering firms and an arms manufacturer.

A spokesman for the commissioners said the decision to pull out of Monsanto was made purely on investment grounds, even though its shares had risen in the past two years. The company confirmed it had been asked to justify its activities after questions from MPs. Norman Baker, Liberal Democrat MP for Lewes, complained that the Church's investment policy was not as ethical as it maintained. But a spokesman denied it had bowed to Mr Baker's ar-

guments over Monsanto, an American firm. "We no longer invest in Monsanto because we have changed our investment management arrangements. It is not for ethical reasons."

Colin Merritt, technical manager for Monsanto UK, said that after Mr Baker's protest in July the company had been asked to explain its activities. Having heard it engineered soya beans and potatoes but not humans or animals, the commissioners were satisfied their investment was ethical, he said. However, the decision to divest had been made shortly afterwards on financial grounds.

"Not being a financial expert I am not sure what those reasons were. We have grown considerably in terms of share value over the last couple of years, and we are of course a growth company in the longer term," he said. Mr Baker welcomed the decision. "Investment in Monsanto is incompatible with the Christian doctrine. I am delighted the

Church Commissioners have pulled out, even if they have moved in rather mysterious ways."

Despite the decision, MPs will continue to question the church's investment policy. Yesterday the commissioners' spokesman confirmed it was keeping an investment of almost £1m in Total Oil, despite the Methodists' decision to scrap a £300,000 holding in the firm because of its involvement in Burma. Many Western companies have taken the view that it is impossible to do business there without supporting the military government.

The commissioners promised to look into the issue, but yesterday their spokesman said they were satisfied by the company's assurance that it had a common policy for the treatment of all its employees. An independent report had recently said the firm had not employed forced labour, he added.

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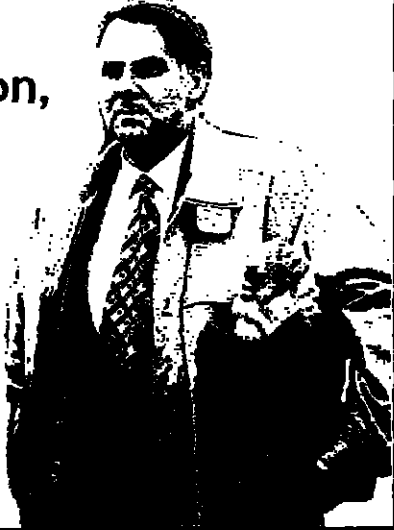
IN TOMORROW'S 5-SECTION
INDEPENDENT

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the Seine TIME OFF

■ Gordon Brown: Iron
laddie comes up trumps
for savers YOUR MONEY

■ Thirsty work: Why our
rivers are dying THEMAGAZINE

■ Tom
Wilkinson,
star of
The Full
Monty,
bares all
THE EYE



IN THE
INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

■ Five star proprietors:
The men making hotels
hot again

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Recycled paper made
up 41.4% of the raw
material for UK new
papers in the first
half of 1997.

Scrubs staff admit beatings go on

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

AN INDEPENDENT watchdog group warned yesterday that they were "seriously concerned" that "a few unrestrained officers" at Wormwood Scrubs - the jail at the centre of allegations of staff brutality - may be abusing inmates.

A report by the Board of Visitors at the west London jail also said that prison chaplains had passed on allegations of beatings and staff had privately admitted "it goes on".

As it became clear last night the warnings were given to the Prison Service three weeks ago, a new governor, Stephen Moore, currently in charge of Albany Prison on the Isle of Wight, was drafted in to head Wormwood Scrubs.

It emerged that it took a separate set of allegations - that about 20 officers had systematically beaten at least eight inmates at the prison - for an inquiry to be set up. The investigation into the claims began yesterday as officers at the jail walked out in protest at a "lack of support" from management in dealing with the allegations.

It is also understood that Sir David Ramsbottom, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, privately described the jail as "appalling" after members of his inspectorate carried out a visit about two months ago.

The growing number of complaints and allegations against the jail's regime is rapidly turning the situation into a major issue for the Prison Service and ministers.

The early publication of the Board of Visitors' annual report yesterday added fuel to the controversy. It said a "principal area of concern is inmate allegations of abuse by officers".

It added: "We are seriously concerned at the possibility of a few unrestrained officers tainting the reputation of the majority of decent, dedicated staff."

"Some names [of officers] crop up regularly in these alle-

gations and some staff have privately acknowledged to us that 'it goes on'."

The visitors said that although the complaints have been examined and none was upheld, there remained doubts that it was a "whitewash".

The segregation unit, which can house up to 14 inmates who are usually sent there for being violent or disruptive, was singled out for criticism. The report said that inmates believed it was "a place where force is illicitly and habitually used" and prisoners alleged that strip searches were "carried out routinely".

The report was sent to the Prison Service on 25 February. Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, was shown a copy only yesterday. Board of Visitors reports are usually held for a month before they are published.

Further criticism of the "Scrubs", which holds about 1,400 remand and sentenced offenders, is contained in a recent letter to Stephen Shaw, director of the Prison Reform Trust. The Independent understands that Sir David said he was receiving "more and more complaints" about conditions at the jail and a short visit their by the inspectorate at the turn of the year "confirms many of the complaints we are receiving."

Mr Moore is to take up his new post in 10 days. Wormwood Scrubs has been without a governor since November.

Yesterday morning the jail's acting governor, Michael Gordon, was faced with a protest meeting of 200 of the 700 staff outside the prison gate.

The Prison Officers' Association said the claims, which were presenting a dossier by a firm of solicitors, were "absolutely shameful".

Branch secretary Duncan Keys said: "As far as we can ascertain they are based on supposition, innuendo, myth, everything in fact except fact."

"There is no evidence, no medical evidence that would support any of their allegations."



Ship-shape: Lt Melanie Robinson, 29, on board HMS Express in Troon yesterday. She and Lt Suzanne Moore, 26, of HMS Dasher in Portsmouth, shattered centuries of tradition when they became the first women to take command of Royal Navy warships, as was revealed in *The Independent* last month. Photograph: Chris Bacon

Irvine pleads artistic licence

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

THE LORD Chancellor said last night that it was better to have fine works of art on his walls than have them "languishing in cellars" when he threw open the doors of his grace-and-favour apartment in the Lords for the first time since its controversial £650,000 refurbishment.

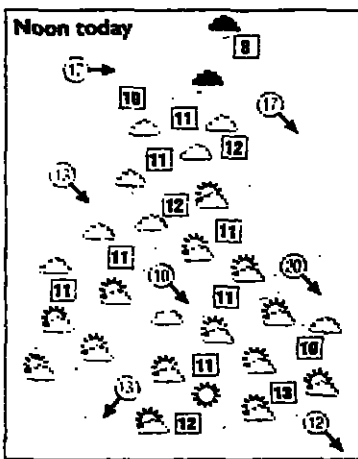
Welcoming around 100 guests from the Womankind Worldwide charity to the River Room, Lord Irvine said: "I'm not going to ask you what you think about it. Someone once said you have to suffer for your art - and it is not even my art! I hope you will agree with the trustees of the leading museums that it is better for these beautiful pictures and sculptures to be here - available for people to see - rather than languishing in cellars where no one can enjoy them."

The guests getting a preview before the work is finished and officially opened to media scrutiny next month were attending a £35-a-head fundraising reception hosted by Lord Irvine for the charity. It was being held to celebrate women's achievements in the legal profession, and those invited include Cerie Booth QC, the Prime Minister's wife, who, as an assistant recorder in county courts, is on the first rung of the ladder to becoming a judge.

The charity helps women in Third World countries fight poverty and oppression and the event, which will be followed by other openings for invited groups, also launched the charity's Civil Literacy for Women campaign to educate women about their legal rights.

As Britain's senior law officer, Lord Irvine told his guests he would do all he could to give women lawyers a fair chance to become judges. He said women should be proud of what they had achieved in the legal profession "against the odds". But he added: "We must do more to break down the barriers women still face in order to join the legal profession, and barriers to making progress within it... My duty is to ensure we are not deprived of their talent by creating the conditions in which ambitious women can make their mark."

WEATHER



The Northern Isles will be the only part of the UK to see dry rain at noon on Friday. However there will be a lull in the rain along the north coast of Scotland and possibly along the north coast of Northern Ireland. Most other parts will have a dry day with any early mist and fog in parts of central and southern England quickly clearing. There will also be some decent sunny breaks but North Sea coasts in East Anglia will have a lot of cloud to spoil things.

Outlook for the next few days
Little change, with high pressure dominating and keeping the weather settled. Most places will see spells of sunshine after early morning mist or fog patches. However, the east coast will be cloudier, and the north and north-west of Scotland may have some more cloud. This situation will remain through the weekend, but on Monday the settled weather will break down with rain moving into Scotland and Northern Ireland.

British Isles weather

Most recent available figures at noon local time
C: cloudy; O: clear; F: fog; H: haze; M: mist; R: rain; S: sunny; Sh: shower; SN: snow; Th: thunder.

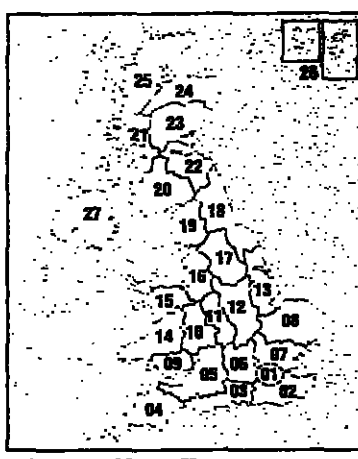
Aberdeen	c 9 40	Inverness	c 8 48
Anglesey	c 9 40	Isle of Wight	c 11 54
Air	c 9 40	Jersey	c 11 52
Belfast	c 11 52	Liverpool	c 9 48
Blackpool	c 11 50	Manchester	c 11 50
Bournemouth	c 12 54	Newcastle	c 9 48
Brighton	c 12 54	Nottingham	c 11 50
Bristol	c 11 52	Reading	c 11 50
Cardiff	c 11 50	Sheffield	c 11 50
Carlisle	c 9 48	Sunderland	c 11 52
Cork	c 12 54	Swansea	c 9 48
Dorset	c 9 48	Torquay	c 9 48
Exeter	c 11 52	Walsley	c 9 48
Gloucester	c 9 48	Warrington	c 9 48
Hereford	c 9 48	Widnes	c 9 48
Leeds	c 11 52	Wolverhampton	c 9 48
London	c 11 52	York	c 11 52

Air quality

Yesterday's readings

	NO ₂	SO ₂
London	Mod	Good
SE England	Mod	Good
Wales	Mod	Good
SE England	Mod	Good
Wales	Mod	Good
Scotland	Mod	Good
N Ireland	Good	Good

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INDEPENDENT Weatherline
For the latest forecasts dial 0891 5009 followed by the two digits for your area indicated by the storm map. Source: The Met Office. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT).

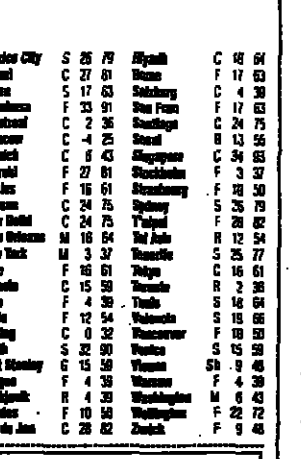
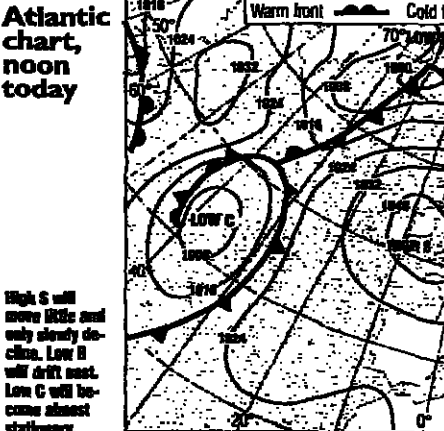
	AM	HT	PM	HT
London	05:48	6.4	16:07	6.4
Liverpool	02:57	8.1	15:18	7.9
Aberdeen	10:53	10.8	23:11	10.5
Hull (Albert Dock)	10:17	7.5	22:42	7.4
Greenock	04:26	2.9	16:37	2.9
Dun Laoghaire	03:47	3.4	16:28	3.4

Height measured in metres

World weather

Most recent available figures at noon local time

Abuja	c 13 55	Amman	c 22 72	Beijing	c 22 72	Bombay	c 22 72	Buenos Aires	c 22 72	Cairo	c 22 72	Calcutta	c 22 72	Chennai	c 22 72	Columbo	c 22 72	Dhaka	c 22 72	Dubai	c 22 72	Harbin	c 22 72	Hong Kong	c 22 72	Kobe	c 22 72	London	c 22 72	Los Angeles	c 22 72	Manila	c 22 72	Moscow	c 22 72	Mumbai	c 22 72	Nairobi	c 22 72	Paris	c 22 72	Rangoon	c 22 72	Seoul	c 22 72	Singapore	c 22 72	Taipei	c 22 72	Tokyo	c 22 72	Yokohama	c 22 72
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Atlantic chart, noon today
High 6 will move little and only slowly decline. Low 6 will drift east. Low 6 will become almost stationary.



WILLIAM HARTSTON WEATHER WISE
"SAY ANYTHING that you like about me," WC Fields insisted, "except that I drink water." Let us hope there are no WC Fields films on television this Sunday, for 22 March is the World Day for Water, as designated by the United Nations General Assembly in 1992. This year, it is being celebrated under the theme "Groundwater: the invisible resource". According to the World Meteorological Organisation, the total volume of water on the globe comprises 97.5 per cent saline and only 2.5 per cent fresh water. Of the groundwater, however, about 45 per cent is fresh, and indeed some 99 per cent of all liquid fresh water resources are, at any given moment, beneath the surface.

Between 1900 and 1995, there was a sixfold increase in global water consumption, while the world population increased only threefold. As surface water supplies run short, the importance of groundwater will increase. Until recently, however, this has been a resource exploited mainly when surface water has already run out. The main problem is that of sustainable exploitation. Quite apart from identifying the location of this invisible resource, there is the ever-present threat of pollution. Groundwater resources can only be used at a rate at which they can replenish themselves or they will fall victim to what the WMO calls a "chemical time-bomb". Underground water must be one of the earth's greatest under-exploited resources, and it seems certain to develop an ever-increasing importance in mankind's history.

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صوتنا من الامم

Irvine pleads artistic licence

By Colin Brown

THE LORD of the Rings, the most famous of the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, has been the subject of a new book, *The Lord of the Rings: The Art of the Story*, which is a collection of essays and photographs by the author's son, Christopher Tolkien. The book is published by HarperCollins and is priced at £12.99. It is a hardcover book of 288 pages, with 160 black and white photographs. It is a must-read for fans of the books and the films.

At a meeting of the Senate of the University of Central England in Birmingham, the vice-chancellor, Dr Peter Knight, said that he was aware of the book and that he was not sure if it was a book that the university should be concerned with. He said that he was not sure if it was a book that the university should be concerned with. He said that he was not sure if it was a book that the university should be concerned with.

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'Obscene' book faces university with trial

By David Lister
Arts News Editor

A UNIVERSITY vice-chancellor will tell colleagues today that he intends to place the university in conflict with the police in his fight against censorship.

An emergency meeting of the Senate of the University of Central England in Birmingham will take place today to inform senior staff that the college could be prosecuted under the Obscene Publications Act.

Vice-chancellor Dr Peter Knight was interviewed by police earlier this week over his refusal to destroy the university's copy of *Mapplethorpe*, a book about the controversial American photographer, the late Robert Mapplethorpe.

Dr Knight voluntarily attended an interview with West Midlands Police on Wednesday. He was cautioned and interviewed, and the interview was recorded.

The Crown Prosecution Service has objected to two photographs in the book. Following the police interview, a university spokesman confirmed that Dr Knight did not agree to the request for the destruction of the book.

Mapplethorpe, a copy of which is in the British Library and most college libraries, was seized by police last October. They had been alerted by a chemist who developed photographs of the book taken by a student for a thesis on "Fine Art versus Pornography".

Lawyers acting for the CPS decided parts of it were likely to "deprave or corrupt" under the 1959 Obscene Publications Act and advised the police that they

had grounds to ask the university voluntarily to destroy it.

As well as portraits and studies of flowers, the late Mapplethorpe's work features explicit photographs of his - and other people's - sex lives. His most notorious image is of himself with a whip in his rectum. Other works show men performing homosexual acts. His work has been shown at most major galleries in the Western world, including the Institute of Contemporary Arts, the Hayward Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery in London.

Dr Knight said: "It is clear that there is the real possibility of a prosecution of the university and the publishers... As a result of this serious development I believe it is only proper that I should convene an emergency meeting of the Senate of the University in order to ensure that all colleagues understand and appreciate the seriousness of the situation and the potential drain on university resources that may result from any subsequent trial."

"I have informed the West Midlands Police that the university has 26 other books and catalogues of the works of Robert Mapplethorpe together with one CD-ROM."

Dr Knight also said he had undertaken to give West Midlands Police, via the university's solicitors, a definitive statement in response to the request for the destruction of the book by next Monday.

Susan Sandon, marketing director for the publishers Jonathan Cape, told *The Independent*: "This has been in print since 1992, and we certainly have no plans to withdraw it."



Ennobled: Professor Lord Winston, head of the fertility clinic at the Hammersmith Hospital in west London

Photograph: Adrian Dennis

The brooding faces of a fertility god

FOR A LORD of creation he looks uncommonly gloomy. The thick mustache and hang-dog expression convey infinite sadness. Odd, really, in one who has brought joy to hundreds of couples who have found themselves, in his hands, transformed into parents, writes Jeremy Laurence.

Now the fertility pioneer Professor Robert Winston, ennobled by Tony Blair but defied by practically everyone else, has turned his attention to the other end of life. As presenter of a new BBC television series *The Human Body*, he is shown in May, this week defended the decision to allow the cameras to film the last moments of a man dying from inoperable cancer.

In a typically robust piece in Wednesday's *Times* he dismissed critics who fear that the scene may distress the recently bereaved and expressed his "outrage" at "journalists who have tried to sensationalise the decision" to show it on prime-time television.

As a candidate for God's earthly representative, Lord Winston has few equals. He is the moral arbiter of our times - ever ready with an opinion on the latest ethical conundrum and never shy about expressing it.

IN THE NEWS LORD WINSTON

Brilliant, mercurial but also intolerant and arrogant, he has a complex relationship with the media, alternately using and abusing it.

Many times he has made the news himself, as now, by pushing out the ethical boundaries. He has always gone his own way, against received opinion. When it emerged that he was giving fertility treatment to a woman with HIV he was quite prepared to override counter views and was disdainful of the critical public reaction. There has been unease at the Hammersmith Hospital, where he

runs the fertility clinic, about his constant pushing against the limits and his frequent appearances on television. He in turn is frequently irritated by the "bloody bureaucrats who run medicine".

Married with three children, and an orthodox Jew, he speaks often of how much his family means to him and has wondered aloud how he would have coped had he been infertile himself.

He is a libertarian with an authoritarian bent. He has defended treating lesbians - "There is no evidence they would do damage to a child" - and argued on behalf of his HIV-infected patient that she would make an excellent mother.

Television producers love his brooding looks, his deep, reassuring voice and his theatricality - for years he wanted to be an actor, not a doctor. He says he hates talking about himself and loves talking about science. That is why he gives the interviews and makes the films. Sometimes, however, the mask slips and he displays an arrogance bordering on contempt. He thought the reaction to Dolly, the cloned sheep, with warnings of bizarre animals and Identikit Saddam Hussains, was "ludicrous", and the fuss over designer babies raised by the development of genetic screening ill-informed.

The problem is that he doesn't suffer fools - and next to the professor most people are fools. That makes him a prickly teacher.

The arrogance dates from an early age. At the London hospital where he trained, he was a member of the Failed Pharmacology Club after flunking early exams. He wore the club tie, which bore a Latin inscription "Eight Pints", to a subsequent viva (oral exam) - and was promptly failed. He said later: "Pharmacology is a useless subject. If I want to know a dosage I ask a nurse."

Is he happy? It is hard to tell. He once confessed: "I'm very competitive. Every day is a constant battle to do things better." Maybe that's why he looks so gloomy.

WINSTON ON IN-VITRO FERTILISATION

"I was one of those people who thought IVF was a waste of time... I was wrong." That was in 1978, when Steptoe and Edwards had delivered the world's first test tube baby. By 1980 Winston was convinced that IVF was something Hammer-smith hospital should be doing. Now it has one of the largest IVF clinics in Britain.

WINSTON ON THE WOMAN WHO WANTED TO GIVE BIRTH TO HER OWN GRAND-CHILD

Edith Jones, 49, agreed to bear children for her daughter, Suzanne Langston, 20, who was born without a womb. Winston said: "It sounds like rather a brave thing for a mother to do."

WINSTON ON SURROGACY

Initially he was in favour, but later he changed his mind. He said: "I have met a number of mothers who claim not to have been distressed by the experience [of giving up the baby at birth] but who, in fact, have been badly hurt."

WINSTON ON DIANE BLOOD

He read her affidavit on her fight to have her dead husband's baby at 2am and wept. Less than two hours later he was faxing his own opinion in support of her fight to her lawyer. "I thought, God in heaven - how can they do this! This must be wrong."

Sales slump as designer trainers lose footing in fashion stakes

By Kim Sengupta

NOT SO LONG ago they were *de rigueur* for anyone aspiring to street-chic. Designer trainers were statements of style, and Nike one of the most stylish of all. But now the fashion gurus say trainers have had their day, and Nike yesterday revealed a 69 per cent slump in earnings in the final three months of last year.

As a result, the company will cut 1,600 jobs or 7 per cent of its workforce. It says the current woes are largely due to turmoil in the now limping "tiger" economies in the Far East, and an "oversupply" of the product in its largest market, the United States.

Two years ago the company, along with rivals, was accused by Christian Aid of exploiting Third

World workers. The charity also said that trainers were advertised by international athletes like Linford Christie for more than £50 a pair, but the average labour costs of producing them is 46 pence in China and £1.19 in Thailand.

Nike announced, following the criticism, that it would introduce independent monitoring of its factories. Yesterday, it said the cutbacks

would make the company leaner and more competitive.

Industry watchers do not, however, see a quick turnaround for the giant multinational. Diane Daggett of US analysts Dain Rauscher said: "They have got to work through all these issues, primarily inventories and slowing demand."

She did add that an upturn could begin in 1999, but will Nike, and the

other famous brands such as Fila, Adidas, Vans and Converse ever have a market as lucrative as in the past?

Not if the young buyers see their idols abandoning them. The Verve, said to be the coolest band around, wear not trainers, but Clark's Walabees. And Calvin Klein's models are no longer shod in scruffy trainers but work boots. *The Face* magazine says "smart shoes are the way

to walk this year" and another style mag, *I-D*, stated "flashy silver trainers are being overlooked in favour of rugged, subtly shaded action shoes".

Total sales of sports footwear fell by 3.5 per cent in 1996, compared to a rise of 7.7 per cent the previous year, and according to analysts the market is saturated.

Sociologist Philip Armitage said:

"Fashion is fickle... If trainers are now considered naff by the trend-setters then this will permeate down to the market in general over a course of time."

"Designer trainers are not, of course, going to disappear, but they are likely to stop being seen as compulsory wear. A lot of parents will breathe a sigh of relief at that - until the next fad comes along."

Row over car firms' 'racist, tasteless' ads

By Kate Watson-Smyth

Two of the world's largest car makers yesterday had to withdraw advertisements following complaints that they were insulting and racist. Ford had produced a television commercial for its Escort based on the film *The Full Monty*, featuring a group of male strippers.

But the advert, shown in the North-east, received complaints that it only used white men, whereas the film included a black stripper. Toyota also climbed down after it ran an advert in Australia claiming the Queen was a "British export that's had its day". Devised by Saatchi and Saatchi for a Lexus 4WD car, it appeared the day after the republican convention

ended last month, but still faces criticism from royalists. It featured the grille of a Range Rover below the words: "Don't worry, Your Majesty, you're not the only British export that's had its day."

Philip Benwell, chairman of the Australian Monarchist League, said: "It is a grave insult." In a letter to the Japanese ambassador, he wrote: "How dare your companies disparage the Sovereign of Australia."

Brian Sheehan, chief executive of Saatchi and Saatchi, initially defended the advert, saying it was intended to be controversial and had received few complaints but yesterday designers at the firm said it had been withdrawn. A Toyota



A frame from the Full Monty-inspired Ford Escort TV advert, criticised for being racist

spokesman said it was a one-off. "It was developed in Australia and intended for use only in that country. Toyota (GB) Ltd do not agree with the style or content and would never have allowed such an advert to run in this country. We are very pleased it is no longer being used."

In similar vein, Ford apologised for its *Full Monty* advert and said it adhered to a strict equal-opportunities policy. However, two years ago it was at the centre of a similar controversy after it was revealed that white faces had been superimposed over black faces in a photograph used for an ad campaign.

In a statement yesterday Ford said: "The advert was not intended to be an exact reproduction of the film and a group of both black and white actors were auditioned and the four most suitable men were chosen. All four happened to be white."

It said it was giving the advertising agency, Ogilvy &

Mather, an "extra-special push" in its racial-awareness training schemes, based on Ford's own ethnic-diversity programme.

Bill Morris, secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, said: "It would seem neither agency nor client have yet learned society must be reflected in all its diversity... If a black actor was good enough to make *The Full Monty* a runaway success, black people are good enough to help sell the Ford cars which they make."

Hard times forces RSC to make dramatic cuts

THE ROYAL Shakespeare Company is to cancel a national tour and introduce other cuts following smaller-than-hoped audiences at Stratford-upon-Avon and a mounting deficit, writes David Lister.

A current deficit of £1.6m is expected to increase to £2m by April. Although the winter figures for Stratford are up by eight per cent on last year, to an average of 64 per cent, they

are £748,000 below a target set by the company two years ago.

More alarming is that some performances are playing to very low houses. A performance of *Twelfth Night* was only 10 per cent full and one of *The Merchant of Venice* 23 per cent full.

The company will cancel its mid-scale tour, which plays in 800 to 1,000-seat theatres across the country. An internal report, leaked to *The Stage* newspaper,

said: "It is no longer possible to balance our budget without reducing the scale of our work. Base operations in Stratford and London will have to be secured. Ways have been looked at to re-structure the budgets - some will be frozen, some will be cut."

The report continues: "Unfortunately, there will be no mid-scale tour in 1998, despite the huge success of *Cymbeline* [a recently acclaimed production

with Antony Sher]. We are hoping that we can convince funding bodies to correct our funding position to enable us to re-instate this tour in 1999."

The cancellation is a blow for RSC artistic director Adrian Noble, who passionately believes in taking the company around the country, claiming that is the remit of a national company.

A spokesman for the RSC confirmed last night that the mid-

scale tour was being cancelled. He also confirmed the box-office figures, but added that a 64 per cent average "was something most West End theatres would be proud of and we are confident that the average figures for *Twelfth Night* and the *Mechanics of Venice* will be healthier by the end of the season."

The company's troubles were due to a standstill grant from the Arts Council, he said.

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Phone codes to change yet again

By Steve Boggan

TELEPHONE dialling codes in six areas of the country are to change again – in some cases for the third time in seven years – because telecommunications operators are running out of new numbers.

Phone users in Coventry, Portsmouth, Southampton, Cardiff and Northern Ireland will be given fresh area codes beginning 02-plus another identifying digit, while people in London will see the abolition of 0171 and 0181 prefixes.

One positive side-effect of the change in the capital will be the end of the snobbery inherent in having inner and outer London numbers. Instead of two codes, Londoners will all have codes beginning 020.

The changes, which will come into force on 22 April 2000, are being introduced because of the sheer demand on new numbers caused by the steady growth of telephone connections and the huge increase in de-

mand for computer connections to the Internet. Added to that is the demand from new telephone services companies which have to be allocated numbers in blocks of 10,000 to pass on to customers.

Peter Clark, chairman of the national code and number change (NCNC) steering group, said that the new prefixes would give parents and employers greater control over certain telephone services, such as sex lines. From the date of the changes, adult lines and expensive premium rate numbers will be grouped together under an 0909 prefix.

"As well as giving us more numbers, the changes will group UK codes into clear and understandable families," Mr Clark said. "Businesses are not the only ones affected. Everyone with a fixed telephone line, mobile, computer modem or fax machine needs to understand the changes."

"This is a vital step to take our

phone system into the next century."

PhOneDay, in April 1995, paved the way for the latest changes. By inserting a "1" in every code, the path was opened up for future changes and more prefixes – meaning that 01, 02, 03 and so on can be allocated for different uses. However, there are no guarantees that these changes will last longer than the first decade of the new millennium.

In the capital, where businesses have had repeated changes of numbers – and expensive updating of stationery and letterheads on vans and lorries – the London Chamber of Commerce expressed concern.

"Although business is helping the telecoms industry with these changes, we are concerned that they will be very disruptive," a spokesman said.

"We have known about these changes since January last year, and yet it is only now that we are getting some concrete information about them."



Brighton belle: Charles Hadcock with his 20-tonne cast-iron sculpture, which now rests on the town's beach Photograph: Roger Bamber

Sculptor shapes up on the beach

By John Windsor

BRIGHTON beach will never look the same again. A 5-metre high cast-iron abstract sculpture, titled *Passacaglia*, was yesterday being bolted into the shingle by its sculptor, Charles Hadcock – with the help of a crane and a team of engineers and foundrymen.

It weighs 20 tonnes – only a tenth the weight of Antony Gormley's *Angel of the North*, hoisted on a hill outside Gateshead last month – but hefty enough to satisfy the current civic yearning for monumental modernism.

"It's big, it's brave, it's bold", said Lord Bassam, Brighton's council leader, "and it's very Brighton. Like Brighton, it will definitely have a strong reaction."

Like Brighton? Not quite. Though unmistakably contemporary, Hadcock's design relies on almost-forgotten rules of correct proportion, taken from nature, that were cherished as divine by the ancient Greeks and Romans and guarded as

secrets ever since by shady fraternities. The patterned heads of sunflowers, the coils of sea shells – and the façade of the Parthenon – are said to share the same divine geometry.

Does it work? A passer-by, watching Hadcock, 32, a graduate of the Royal College of Art, wielding a spanner, told him: "It's such a pleasing shape, but I don't know why."

"That," Hadcock replied, relishing the moment. "is because it's got sacred geometry."

"It really works," Hadcock said with a grin. "I find that eight out of ten people say they prefer it. People really do know what they like."

Hadcock took his inspiration for the sculpture from the first-century Roman architect Vitruvius. The structure, which is sited opposite Brighton promenade's greasy-spoon cafés and souvenir shops, cost £40,000. It was funded with the help of the National Lottery. It might have amused the ancients to watch holidaymakers, candyfloss in hand, trying to locate the divine in 20 tonnes of cast iron.

Seven years for councillor who set fire to wife

AN accountant was yesterday jailed for seven years after being convicted of pouring petrol over his unfaithful wife and setting her alight.

Warwick Crown Court found Trevor Eames, 55, guilty of causing his wife, Ursula, grievous bodily harm with intent. Judge Richard Bray told Eames, a local councillor, he was guilty of a premeditated terrible deed.

He said: "I am certain the offence was premeditated because your wife dared to leave you, you inflicted a terrible revenge on her. You poured petrol on to her neck then set fire to her. Then you stood by grinning."

"As a result she has suffered the most horrible of injuries which will be with her for the remainder of her life."

Masons to reveal judges

SENIOR judges are understood to have told the United Grand Lodge of Freemasons that they have no objection to the lodge revealing which judges are Masons.

The Judges' Council – chaired by the Lord Chief Justice Lord Bingham and made up of 17 senior judges – met to discuss the question and sent a letter outlining their views to the lodge this morning.

The move comes after the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, said he would write to the lodge – the governing body for the country's 350,000 masons – to ask for a list of Masons in the judiciary and police.

Raid gang boss gets 20 years

A FEARED underworld gang boss dubbed "The Ayatollah" was jailed for 20 years and the mistress he coerced received a three-year sentence yesterday. James Phillips, 47, from Greenwich, south-east London, masterminded "a stream" of armed raids on jewellers and other targets over four years which netted more than £1m, an Old Bailey court was told.

His lover, Christine Clapp-Smith, 48, from Bermondsey, south London, helped him set up two raids on West End jewellery shops. Before one raid, she made up an armed robber to look like a woman so as not to arouse suspicion. But Clapp-Smith was "a terrified robot" in the hands of her violent lover, according to her counsel, Ian Joblin.

Lawyer faces prosecution

A LAWYER is facing professional charges and a police investigation into allegations that he forged divorce decrees. The Law Society of Scotland confirmed it is to prosecute Kenneth Anderson at an independent tribunal which has the power to disbar lawyers. Lothian and Borders Police issued a statement confirming it is also probing the allegations against the lawyer.

Buying pasta – with a twist

TESCO is offering customers a crash course in Italian to save mistakes at the check-out. One shopper asked for Lamborghini instead of linguini, the thin, flat pasta, while another asked for rigor mortis instead of rigatoni, tube shaped pasta. Tesco has drawn up a leaflet spelling out the names phonetically.

Before you go shopping this weekend, check out the Q's.

Q. Is Air Conditioning included?
A. It certainly is.

Q. How about a really sexy cloth trim interior?
A. Yes, it's standard.

Q. What about security?
A. The engine immobiliser system comes as standard. Does it have power steering? A. It does have power steering.

Q. Airbags?
A. Driver's and front passenger's.

Q. Is there a choice of engines?
A. SURE: 1.4, 1.6 PETROL AND 1.9 TURBO DIESEL.

Q. ELECTRIC FRONT WINDOWS?
A. OF COURSE.

Q. DOES IT HAVE PLIP CENTRAL LOCKING?
A. IT DOES.

Q. WHAT ABOUT COLOURS? SOMETHING STRIKING...
A. You've got it.

Q. HOW SPECIAL ARE THESE 306 SPECIAL EDITIONS?
A. Very, very special.

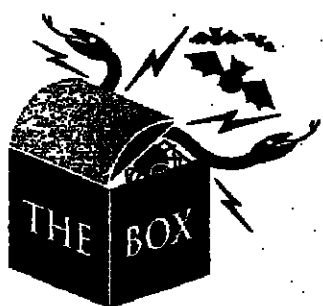
Q. Do I have to pay extra for alloy wheels?
A. Nope.

Q. Is the steering wheel height adjustable?
A. Absolutely. As are the front seat belts and head restraints.

Q. Tinted glass, a possibility?
A. Tinted glass, a certainty.

Q. FINANCE... WHAT'S YOUR BEST?
A. How about 2 Years' 0% Finance?*

Q. How about metallic Nile Blue, or pearlescent Diablo Red?
A. It's also like front fog lights, alloy wheels, and front passenger airbags are standard on 1.6 litre petrol and 1.9 litre turbo diesel models. *Typical 0% finance example: 306 Vivant 1.6 litre petrol, 5 door with air conditioning, on the road price £11,950. 24 monthly payments £249.99, total amount payable £23,998.44. Deposit for finance, alloy wheels and front passenger airbags are standard on 1.6 litre petrol and 1.9 litre turbo diesel models. *Typical 0% finance example: 306 Vivant 1.6 litre petrol, 5 door with air conditioning, on the road price £11,950. 24 monthly payments £249.99, total amount payable £23,998.44. Deposit for finance, alloy wheels and front passenger airbags are standard on 1.6 litre petrol and 1.9 litre turbo diesel models. *Typical 0% finance example: 306 Vivant 1.6 litre petrol, 5 door with air conditioning, on the road price £11,950. 24 monthly payments £249.99, total amount payable £23,998.44. 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Asian idol

A FRIEND of Pandora's recently returned from an exotic holiday in Cambodia with a tale that should warm Peter Mandelson's heart.

During her tour around the beautiful but backward land, she met many friendly Cambodians but was struck by how little they knew of the rest of the world.

Most had never heard of such Western icons as the Beatles, Elvis or even the Spice Girls. However, while she was walking in the temple gardens at Angkor Wat, she was approached by a pleasant young man who asked where she called home. When she told him that she was from Britain, his face broke into an enormous grin and he said, "Ah, yes, Tony Blair!"

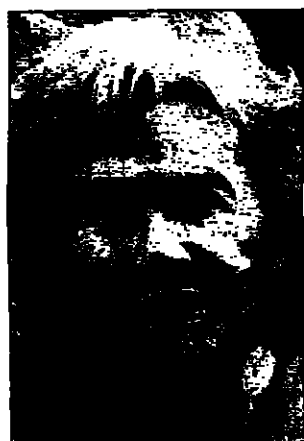
Derry's in demand

POOR Lord Irvine. It seems he is facing a huge tax bill as a result of his selfless flat refurbishment on behalf of future generations.

Since the details of his plans for the Lord Chancellor's apartments became public, a number of clergymen have written cross letters to the newspapers. They have pointed out that the Inland Revenue charged them for benefits in kind when their vicarages were done up. On their behalf, Tory MP Eric Forth put down a question. It was answered by Dawn Primarolo, a Treasury minister, to the effect that government ministers occupying official residences met the statutory conditions for exemption from tax on living accommodation or structural alterations. That seemed clear until she added: "Where improvements to the accommodation consist of repairs, decoration or furniture, tax is charged on a benefit by Section 163 (2) of ICTA to 10 per cent of the taxable ministerial salary and any other benefits."

Wallpaper, mirrors, curtains: sounds like decoration and furniture to me. When Pandora called the Treasury to confirm that this made Lord Irvine liable to a whopping tax, he was told by an Inland Revenue spokesman, "All Dawn Primarolo did was set down the rules. At the Inland Revenue we do not comment on the tax position of any individuals, including Lord Irvine." Derry, better ring your accountant.

Northern exposure



A FRIEND of Pandora's is well acquainted with Lady Aitken, Jonathan's charming mother. When he was arrested on Tuesday, the police were very discreet about which London station was used for his interview in order to keep the pack of journalists from mobbing him on his exit. (As it was, they mobbed him on his home doorstep.) My friend happened to speak to Lady Aitken during the day and casually asked where her son was being griled. "It's in Fulham," said the good lady. "Although if they really wanted to keep anyone from finding him they ought to have taken him to a station north of the Park." Highgate? Isn't that a wasteland somewhere near Leeds?

Cyber slander

PANDORA wandered over to the Central Office of Information offices in Lambeth earlier this week to watch the BSE hearings and was impressed by the technology.

All official participants were equipped with lap-tops on which they could watch a rolling transcription of the hearings as typed by a recording secretary. However, when the language speeded up, it was obvious that the recorder had to struggle to keep pace. Thus the word "cannibalistic" came on the screen as "cannibal list tick". This gave Pandora a mildly amusing free association - "cannibal lipstick" - until another variant flashed on screen. Professor Richard Lacey had been speaking of how in the past the Ministry of Agriculture had been "pushing a line". The screen transcript rendered this as "pushing a lie".

Shortly thereafter, the chairman of the panel himself began to refer to how the government had been "pushing a lie". Can you sue a computer for libel?

Pandora

DAILY POEM

Entertaining women

By D J Enright

In a night-club in Hiroshima,
A combo playing noisily,
A girl asked sweetly, "Kohi shimaska?"
Should they make coffee?
No, he replied, it kept him awake.
It was "koi", it struck him later, not "kohi".
It was love she had offered, not coffee.
The thought kept him awake.

Next day, as a guest of Rotary,
He conveyed (without authority)
Fraternal greetings from Cradley Heath.
Waiting outside was a victim
(Rotary does not entertain women),
A victim for him to see, to see him.
Him with his face still scarlet,
Her with her white scarred arms.

This is our final selection from D J Enright's *Collected Poems 1948-1998* (Oxford University Press, £15). Enright taught English for many years in the Far East and Egypt, and has also worked as a publisher, critic and editor. This poem first appeared in *Instant Chronicles* (1985).

MP meets prostitute stepdaughter

By Kate Watson-Smyth



Family reunion: Jessica Sobel arriving to meet her stepfather (right) Photograph: David Dyson

MARTIN BELL, the former war reporter turned independent MP, was yesterday reunited with his stepdaughter, a former prostitute and porn star whom he has not seen for nine years.

Jessica Sobel, 29, who was flown to London by a national newspaper, met up with her stepfather in a hotel and the pair talked and posed for photographs. But although Mr Bell was happy to see her again, he expressed disquiet that the meeting had been arranged by the *Mirror*.

He knew nothing of his stepdaughter's life until she was tracked down by reporters in the US, and he only discovered that she had worked as a prostitute after her book was published four months ago.

He wrote to her then saying he hoped they could meet up and yesterday they were reunited. Mr Bell said: "It was a very friendly meeting and we spent about two hours together."



and they are looking after her during her stay."

But despite his discomfort about the meeting, Mr Bell said he would stay in touch with his stepdaughter. "She needs all the support she can get at the moment. Her war zones were much more terrible than mine."

The MP for Tatton was working in Washington and married to his first wife Helen Gordon when he met Miss Sobel's mother, Rebecca, in 1976. They were lovers for eight years and then married for four. But they separated in 1988 and divorced three years later.

After graduating from university, Miss Sobel went to Hollywood and "did just about every despicable thing there is". After a bit part in *Baywatch* she turned to porn movies and later became a nude masseuse and £500-a-night prostitute.

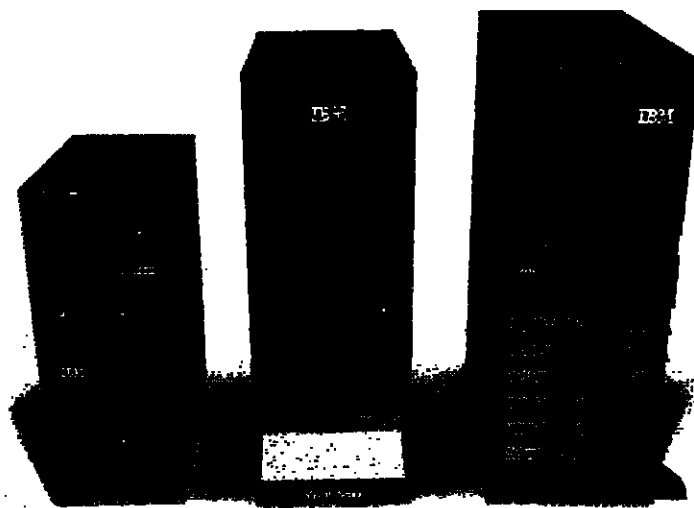
Two years ago, she decided to get her life back on track and wrote a book about her experiences. When it was published, he immediately sent a letter asking her to get in touch.

er. I hope to see her again but I have to go to my constituency and she is only staying for two or three days. But she knows where to contact me now. I think she is quite happy to stay in London sightseeing."

He said that pictures of the meeting were taken by the *Mirror* during their meeting. "It was a deal with the *Mirror* and I was not a party to that. As a former journalist it is not something I am particularly happy about but it was all arranged. Jessica was flown over by the *Mirror* and they were with her all the time

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HE WOULDN'T BE LATE.



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HAND-HELD MOBILE PHONES AND DRIVING. IT'S A BAD CALL.

Whitehall urged to seek end to 'cruel' veal trade

By Katherine Butler
in Brussels

ANIMAL welfare campaigners urged the Government to seek a change in EU law last night after losing a legal battle to put a permanent end to shipments of veal calves from Britain.

The European Court found that the British Government would be acting illegally if it imposed a unilateral ban on veal calf exports. The 15 judges rejected a challenge by Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) to the Government's claim that even if it wanted to end live-calf exports, its hands were tied by the rules of the single market.

The defeat was "devastating", Joyce D'Silva of CIWF said. "This shows that free trade is God in the European Union... Free trade is fine for

cabbages and TV sets but it has to be a different matter when animals are suffering".

The outcome will have no practical effect for now because British traders have in any case been banned from shipping cattle abroad under the "mad cow disease" ban imposed on Britain in March 1996. Before the BSE ban more than half a million veal calves were exported each year from Britain to be reared in crates in Holland, Belgium, France and Italy. Public outrage about the cruelty involved led to protests and blockades on British ports in 1995.

But Ms D'Silva said calves would be one of the first categories certified for export as the EU's BSE ban is phased out. The first lifting of the embargo for meat from Northern Irish herds was agreed earlier this week.



One of the veal calves in a 'welfare-rearing' base at the Rosemaund Research Centre near Hereford. Campaigners are fighting for an end to veal-calf shipments to the Continent
Photograph: Reuters

She said the onus was on the Government to put the case for a change in the law on the EU agenda immediately. "Labour have said they want a meat trade not a livestock trade in Europe. They are armed with a new declaration in the Amsterdam treaty which recognises that

animals are sentient beings, and they have the EU presidency until July. They could not be in a stronger position".

Labour pledged before coming to power that it would ban the veal-calf export trade if the European Court established that it could be done legally

within the confines of the single market. Lawyers for CIWF had argued in the High Court of England and Wales that Britain could invoke a clause in the EU treaty which allows governments to block trade for reasons of public morality, public policy or the health and life

of animals. They argued that because a significant section of public opinion in Britain believed EU rules on veal-calf raising are too weak, Britain should be allowed an exemption.

But the judges, overturning a preliminary opinion by the Court's own Advocate General,

said Britain could not impede the calf trade because common EU rules on the minimum standards for the raising of calves in crates already exist.

Pressure from Britain led to inclusion last June of a new EU treaty protocol which obliges Brussels to "pay full regard to the

welfare requirements" of animals when implementing market policies. The treaty has not yet been ratified but Ms D'Silva said the ruling flew in the face of the spirit of the protocol. The Court failed to give animal welfare or the concerns of the British public "the time of day" she said.

Shops accused on own-brand cigarettes

By Jeremy Laurence
Medical Editor

SUPERMARKETS were accused yesterday of covertly profiting from the tobacco trade by selling thinly disguised "own brand" cigarettes.

Most major chains sell own-label cigarettes but in nearly all cases their ownership is concealed because supermarkets fear it will harm their image, Dr Martin Jarvis of University College, London claimed.

A study published in the *British Medical Journal* found that own-label cigarettes were on average 20 per cent cheaper than leading brands but had higher nicotine and tar levels. Dr Jarvis, who conducted the research, said the supermarkets were exploiting groups who could least afford to smoke, suffered most from smoking and who most needed to give up.

He said: "With nearly all other products the supermarket's name is prominently displayed on the label. But most of these cigarette packets don't mention the supermarket at all. It's as if they are ashamed of what they are up to. They want to profit from the tobacco trade without associating their names with it."

Retailers' own-brand cigarettes account for half of all the brands marketed in the UK and 7 per cent of all cigarettes sold. On average, they cost £2.48 for a packet of 20, as against the normal selling price of £3.20 for brand leaders.

Own-label cigarettes identified in the study included Benington at Tesco, Kings Men at

Co-op and Balmoral at Asda. Only Asda's packet carried the store name.

Dr Jarvis, of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund's health behaviour unit, said some stores had transferred ownership of the brand to the manufacturing company in a bid to dissociate themselves from the tobacco industry.

But he said most of the lines were available exclusively through the supermarket outlets and claims that they were not own-label brands were "semantics".

Tesco remained adamant, however, that the Benington range was not an own-label product. A spokesman said the line was launched in 1995 as an own-label product but the policy had been reviewed and ownership of the trademark passed to makers R J Reynolds. They were also on sale at other outlets, he said.

Co-op insisted the lines it sold were "exclusive brands, not own-brand cigarettes". A spokesman said: "We provide them as a service to our customers who smoke. We need to be able to compete against other retailers... In some respects we are caught between the devil and the deep blue sea."

Dr Vivienne Nathanson, head of science and ethics at the British Medical Association, said: "The supermarket chains want to be seen as the friend of the hard-pressed mother, offering wholesome food at reasonable prices... It is quite grotesque that they should be actively engaged in selling these cheap unbranded cigarettes..."

Designers bring style to aids for disabled

WHEELCHAIRS, walking sticks and Zimmer frames should be trendier and better designed so disabled people are proud to be seen with them, a design conference was told yesterday, writes Rosa Prince.

Disabled people complain that because equipment is usually provided by the NHS or social services, it is often clinical, ugly and unwieldy. Many are ashamed to be seen with it.

Rather than being treated as a single group, disabled people say they should be targeted as consumers with different needs, opinions and lifestyles.

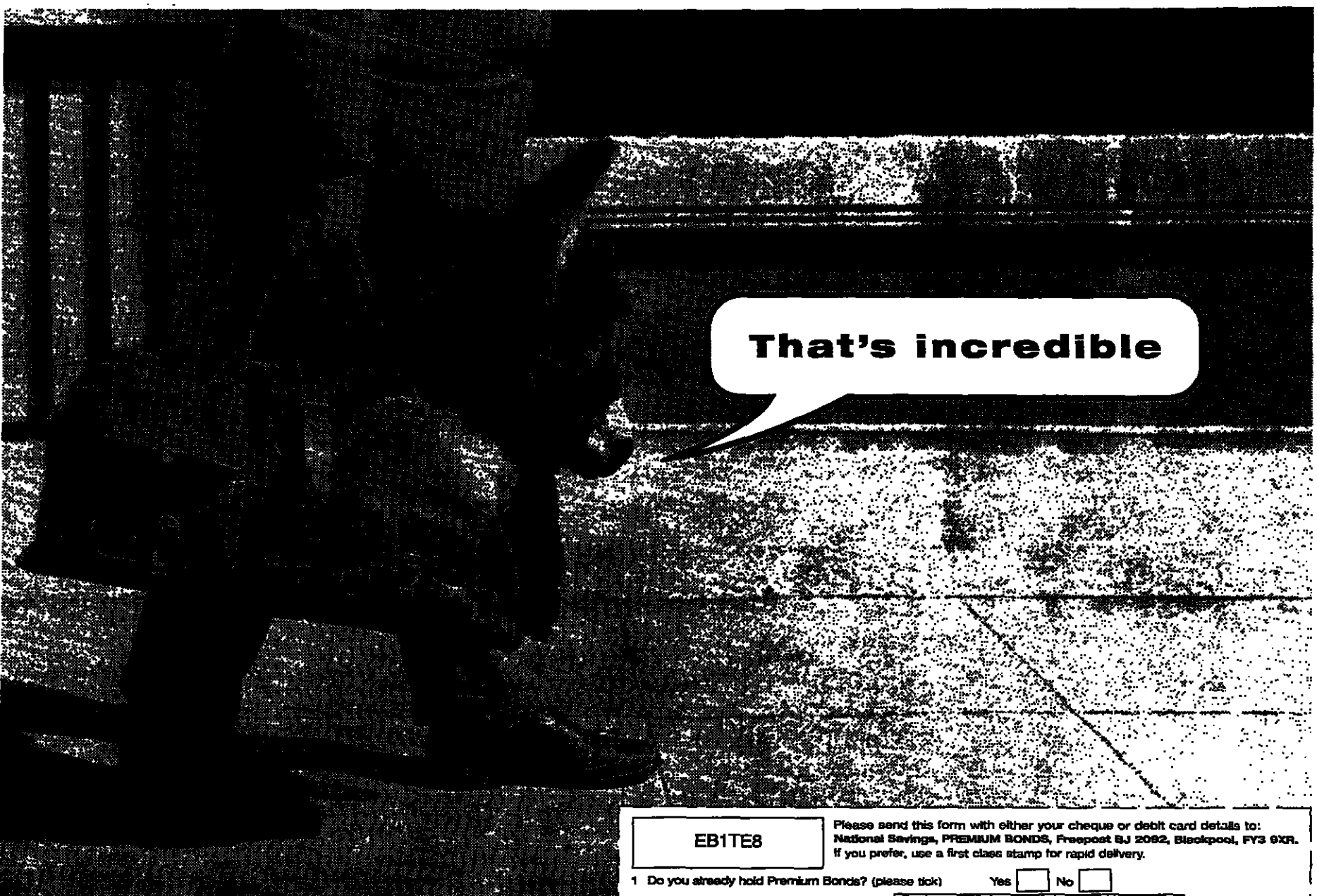
To help manufacturers meet the challenge of providing equipment for such a disparate group, a CD-ROM called De-

sign Aid was launched yesterday detailing the interests and aspirations of disabled people.

Compiled by Design for Ability at Central St Martin's College in London, the CD-ROM is based on interviews with 600 disabled people and will be used by designers and manufacturers who want to know more about their lives.

To show the type of equipment which could be made using the CD-ROM, the design consultants Tangerine have produced the Active Walking Frame - lightweight, foldaway and partly made of wood. Researchers say disabled people were proud to be seen with it, and it is as cheap to produce as an NHS Zimmer frame.

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M. _____
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Just have patience, Blair tells his audience

By Anthony Evans
Political Editor

TONY BLAIR made a heartfelt plea for public patience yesterday, when the Prime Minister and Gordon Brown met 250 people for a post-Budget question-and-answer session.

Towards the end of a one-hour meeting with a cross-section of community representatives in the assembly hall of Geoffrey Chaucer School, south London, during which demands were made for pensioners, charities, business, childcare, further education, public transport and the arts, Mr Blair suddenly broke away from the detailed questions.

"Everybody wants everything and wants it the day before yesterday," he said.

He warned that he intended to be a Prime Minister for the long-term, laying down strong foundations, and there was no question whatever of taking short-term, short-sighted policies, for example, by relieving business of the pressure from the high-value pound. He said the

Conservatives had taken short-term decisions based on false prospectuses, and had created record interest rates, record repossessions and negative equity. "I never want to go back to those days again," he said. "The decisions that we take now, difficult though they are, are based on a long-term strategy."

Everybody wanted money from him now, but the Government was setting priorities and was moving steadily, step by step, and as Prime Minister, he had to have "the courage to say, 'No'". Mr Blair then launched into his version of the *Monty Python* spoof from *The Life of Brian*, in which people had asked: "What have the Romans done for us?" He said the Government had in fact made a start on welfare to work, schools, hospitals, and pensions. "And we are going to do more," he said. "But it will take time... We'll do what we can, but we can't do it all at once."

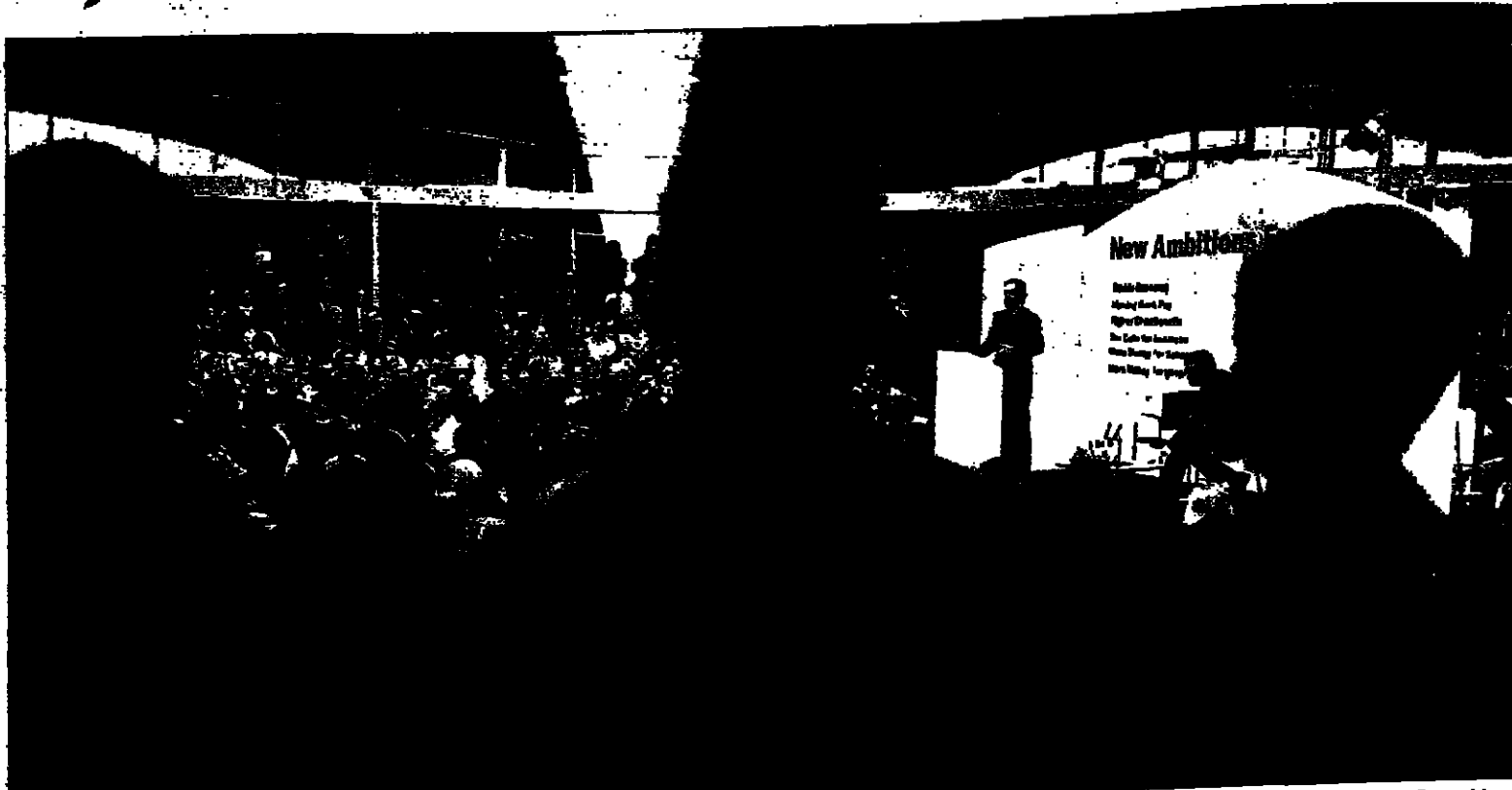
The difference between the styles of Mr Blair and Mr Brown could not have been

more marked - with the Prime Minister taking his jacket off and regularly smiling at the audience - but the session was also marked by a double-act banter between the two men.

At an early stage of the proceedings, Mr Brown said some of the questions were not so much reflections on his Budget statement as early representations for the next Budget - "if 'Baby lets me give it'", Mr Blair quipped. "You're doing fine", to which Mr Brown replied, quick as a flash: "It's not a plea."

The only hard news came in a throwaway line from the Chancellor, who disclosed that he expected an announcement to be made on the future of state pensions in June, following completion of a Government review.

At the end of the meeting, there was another double-act exchange, when Mr Blair said people who had not got their questions in could send them in. "Difficult questions to Number 10," Mr Brown said. "And I will pass them on to Number 11," the Prime Minister added.



Double act: Tony Blair and Gordon Brown at the post-Budget session at Geoffrey Chaucer School, south London, yesterday. Photograph: Brian Harris

Unions call for summit on worker rights

By Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

TWO OF the Labour Party's biggest financial backers last night called for the first emergency meeting of the TUC Congress in more than two decades if their worst fears about the Government's attitude to workers' rights are realised.

Following a meeting between TUC leaders and the Prime Minister in Downing Street on Wednesday, the left-led Transport & General Workers' Union and the right-wing Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union are seriously concerned that the "Fairness at Work" White Paper will prove objectionable to the union movement.

Bill Morris, leader of the transport workers, believes the

The concern of the unions follows the Downing Street meeting, but has also resulted from continuing contacts with ministers over the past few months. Anxiety among union leaders was exacerbated by news earlier this week that Tony Blair had been actively opposing a European directive aimed at giving workers enhanced rights to consultation and information.

The TUC conference meets annually and the last "reconvened congress" took place 22 years ago to discuss the so-called Social Contract between the then Labour government and the unions.

The White Paper and the legislation which will follow it, could prove to be a watershed in relations between employees' leaders and the Government and could determine whether unions want to remain the main financial benefactors of the Labour Party.

Sources close to Mr Morris say he is concerned that the White Paper, due out within the next month or so, will stipulate a turnout rate in excess of 70 per cent for any ballot on union recognition. Senior officials at the union are also concerned that the document will suggest that management should be allowed to conduct ballots on "derecognition".

Other clauses causing concern would prohibit industrial action in disputes on recognition and introduce a three-year gap between votes. Sources at the T & G argue that such a law would "do as much harm as good" for employee representation.

Trade unionists generally have expressed their doubts that the Government would observe the spirit as well as the letter of the manifesto commitment. Hitherto attention has centred on whether the intended law would insist that recognition could only be granted where half the workforce voted for it, rather than those who voted. The 70 per cent threshold would be another way of ensuring overwhelming support. Another clause exercising trade union minds is how the constituencies for ballots will be determined.

A Downing Street spokesman said that the Prime Minister had confirmed the Government's intention to fulfil the pledge on recognition, but wanted to implement the change "sensibly" and only after full consultation with both unions and business. He said the meeting on Wednesday was "friendly and positive".



Bill Morris: Fears barriers to trade union recognition

document will propose legislation with unacceptable barriers to union recognition and last night told a meeting of businessmen in Guernsey that he would be calling for a special TUC meeting. The engineers' leader Ken Jackson, who is equally concerned about Tony Blair's strategy, said that he would support a call for an emergency session of the union movement if the White Paper did not meet the TUC's demands.

John Monks, general secretary of the TUC, however attempted to pour cold water on the idea. He expected a White Paper in line with Labour's manifesto and there were no plans for an extraordinary meeting apart from a long-planned conference on employment rights scheduled for 6 May which would be addressed by Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade.

The intended legislation was a significant part of the *quid pro quo* which resulted in a concerted silence among union leaders before the last election and has led to continued passivity ahead of the White Paper.

Stop cricket funds, says MP

THE England and Wales Cricket Board should be deprived of public funds until it promises to improve its equal opportunities practice, an MP said yesterday.

A Commons early day motion put down by Liberal Democrat Theresa Harrell, who said she was bullied into having an abortion and then unlawfully dismissed. The motion said public and lottery funds should be stopped until assurances were given about employment policies. Jennifer Jonge, MP for Richmond Park and the motion's author, said: "I find it inconceivable that this sort of behaviour is prevalent today. We are no longer living in the dark ages."



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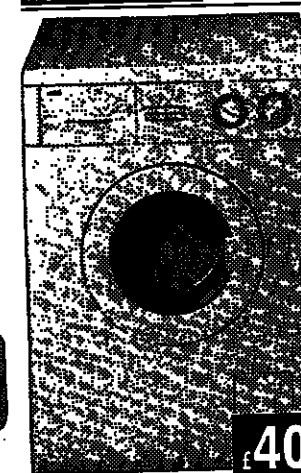
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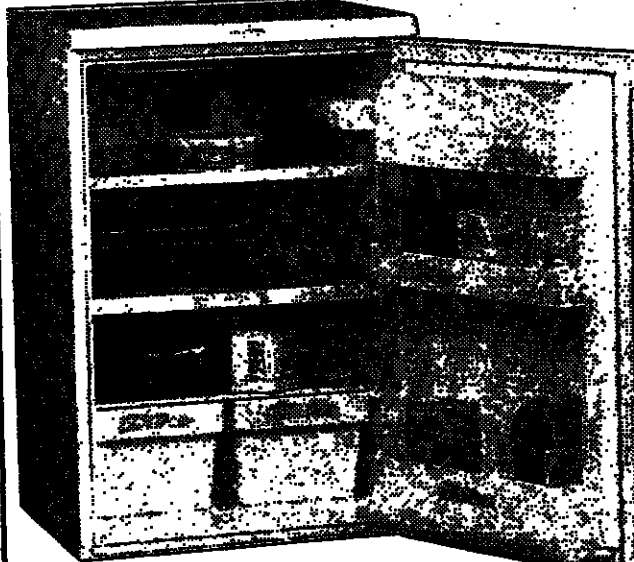
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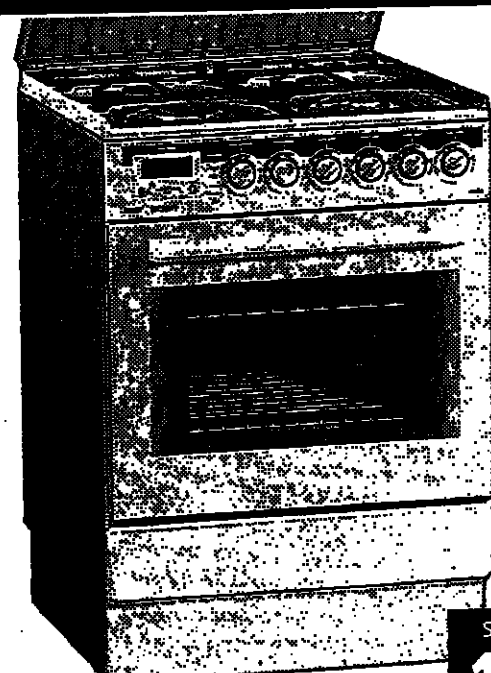
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مكتبة الامم

Jews float plan for their own TV channel

Leading Jewish broadcasters back idea which could even include a soap opera

By Rob Brown
Media Editor

REMEMBER Rebbe, the Rapping Rabbi, whose stand-up act used to make sporadic appearances on our television screens? Don't worry if you missed him. He could soon have his very own show.

Britain's Jews are being urged to seize the unique opportunity presented by the digital revolution to create their own television channel.

The call came yesterday from the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR), a leading international think-tank, and is being backed by prominent Jews who hold some of the most powerful posts in British broadcasting, including David Elstein, chief executive of Channel 5, Michael Green, chairman of Carlton Communications, and Sir Jeremy Isaacs, founding chief executive of Channel 4.

His successor Michael Grade was also Jewish. Indeed, until he quit television last year, all of Britain's five terrestrial channels had Jews in prominent positions.

Sir Jeremy said: "There is the potential here for something really exciting and meaningful which reflects the diversity of Jewish lives, experiences and history, and combines modest new programmes, live broadcasts and anthologies the programming commissioned on Jewish themes over the last several decades."

Launching the think-tank's report *Jewish Television: Prospects and Possibilities*, its author Professor Roger Silverstone, professor of media studies at Sussex University, argued that a Jewish television channel could "reflect, express and enhance Jewish culture as an active and creative force within British society."

"It is high time that Jews participated in electronic media space to recover their heritage, to redefine their identity and their social and cultural contribution, and to make their presence felt in the wider public sphere."

Professor Silverstone, acknowledged that there was a risk of creating an "electronic ghetto" though such a narrow casting initiative. But he envisaged that the proposed channel would avoid this danger by appealing from day one to non-Jews. With Britain's Jewish population numbering around 300,000, the network would need to have wider appeal to be commercially viable. A working party will be set up to consider what would constitute kosher television.

"I personally would love to see a soap opera which worked within the stereotypes of Jews but didn't exploit them," Professor Silverstone enthused, adding: "There would doubtless also be lots of talk shows. Jews love to talk and talk is cheap TV." He admitted that Jewish radio wasn't flourishing in Britain and that, even with rich benefactors, a Jewish television channel would probably struggle to get established. But he believes the idea is worth exploring.

The JPR's ideas have been discussed at two policy seminars chaired by Michael Green and attended by a range of television and other media professionals, who believe that changes in media technology provide an opportunity to use television as a catalyst for reinvigorating contemporary Jewish culture.

Britain is set to become the first country in the world with national digital television, available on cable, satellite and terrestrial platforms, so many ethnic groups are seriously looking at how they could launch their own channel.

Ireland's national broadcaster RTE has joined with a leading American cable network to launch Tara Television in the UK, but it has been struggling to negotiate cable carriage.

Paul Maverick, who played the aforementioned Rapping Rabbi, was not available for comment. He's obviously not waiting for a Jewish television channel to change his fortunes. He was in Los Angeles yesterday hustling for commissions for his independent company, Shyster Productions.



Powerful figures: Sir Jeremy Isaacs (top left) and Michael Green (below), along with Lord Grade and his nephew, Michael, have all held prominent positions in British broadcasting

'This Life' gets new lease in the US

By Rob Brown

THIS LIFE, the BBC's deceased hit drama series about twentysomething London lawyers, is set to get a second life across the Atlantic on a new coast-to-coast cable channel called BBC America.

Quite how the exploits of Egg, Anna and their fellow flatmates will play in Des Moines, Iowa, remains to be seen, but the BBC and its new global partner, Discovery Communications Inc are obviously prepared to risk offending Middle America.

BBC America aims to transmit almost everything the BBC produces - including *EastEnders* - rather than just the prestigious costume dramas and natural history documentaries which have been most avidly snapped up in the past by the American public broadcasting service, PBS and the A&E (Arts & Entertainment) cable channel.

The new network will start on 29 March with very limited reach on digital cable, but the plan is

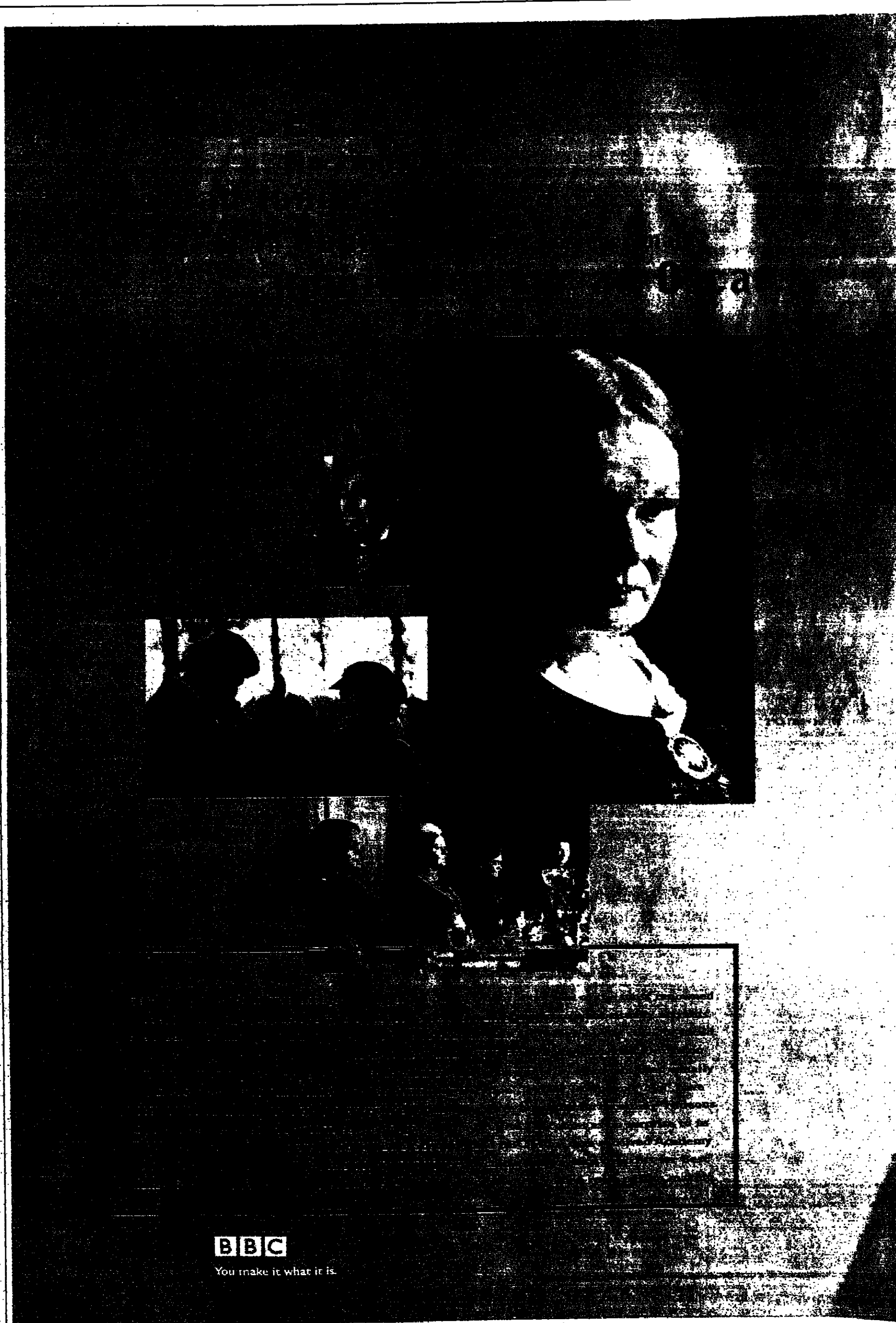
to get it into a large number of cable homes within the next few years. BBC America is just one element of a \$600m (£360m) global alliance between the BBC and Discovery, which was unveiled yesterday after 18 months of tortuous negotiations.

John Birt, the BBC's director-general, and Discovery's chairman and chief executive John Hendricks ceremoniously sealed the deal in a live transatlantic satellite link-up between Television Centre in west London and New York.

Mr Birt said: "This partnership will help the BBC become the world's leading global broadcaster. It is also good news for Britain, for the licensee, for British talent."

Mr Hendricks added: "The marriage of the BBC and Discovery brands is truly a match made in media heaven..."

The two corporations have already teamed up to launch two new channels: People & Arts and Animal Planet, which are available now in Latin America and will be rolled out across the globe.



BBC

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Calais strike hits ferries

FERRY PASSENGERS face severe disruption today with the port of Calais being closed by a French workers' protest.

P&O Stena Line, the combined ferry company, said it would divert Calais services to Zeebrugge. A Dover-Calais ferry would sail at 2.30am today, with the next Dover-Calais boat not sailing until 3am tomorrow. It said it was not carrying foot passengers or day-trippers on Dover-Calais services.

French seafarers and dockers are staging a 24-hour strike over the proposed ending of duty free sales in Europe from next year - a move they see as a threat to jobs. They will close Calais from 5.45am today until 5.45am tomorrow.



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BIGGEST
AL STORES

By Jason Bennetto
Game Correspondent

The judges said a "grave injustice" was done to Mr Roberts who was arrested at his home in Shrewsbury, Shropshire, at the age of 19. The also criticised police from the West Mercia force for not providing him

Mr Roberts, whose case was highlighted by *The Independent* in January, and a man named Richard Evans, then

Mr Roberts was released last August pending the referral back to court by Jack Straw,

The confession was considered inadmissible and there was no case to answer, said Lord Justice Henry, sitting with Mr

Safina Din, from JM Wilson solicitors in Birmingham, said they would be considering claiming compensation for the miscarriage of justice.

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

Five years after WHO declared tuberculosis a global

The infection already kills more people than Aids and malaria combined, yet it can be cured with a cocktail of cheap drugs. It is expected to infect

Two British specialists writing in the *International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases* say cases of TB worldwide have risen 13 per cent since WHO declared its global emergency in 1993 and a "golden op-

The 16 countries in South America, Africa, Russia, India and the Far East identified by WHO account for over half of the world's 7 million annual cases of TB. The fear is that the longer control efforts are delayed the more difficult the epidemic will become to contain.

Dr Carlie Guerra de Mace-

Tuberculosis is spread like the common cold through the air when infectious people cough, sneeze or talk. There are 6,000 cases annually in Britain and there have been outbreaks in New York and other cities.

Lesson from nature: Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Paul Condon (right) yesterday launching plans to revitalise Neighbourhood Watch schemes in London with the help of a team of meercats. The mongoose has been chosen as the project's mascot because of its instinctive community spirit Photograph: Rui Xavier

By Ben Russell
Education Correspondent

the extra places. A spokesman for the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals said: "We are very much in favour of expansion in higher education." ■ University staff were offered a 3.8 per cent pay increase yes-

Staff will get an initial two per cent rise, followed by another 1.8 per cent after eight months. Peter Humphreys, chief ex-

executive of the Universities and Colleges Employers Association, said: "We have put forward an offer which we believe to be fair and equitable."

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Beaver set to return 400 years after being hunted to extinction



Rodent's return: The European beaver, which Scottish Natural Heritage hopes to reintroduce to the central Highlands

By Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

THE BEAVER could be returning to Scotland around the millennium, after being absent from the British Isles for more than 400 years. Yesterday, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the Government's wildlife conservation arm north of the border, made it clear that it was keen to reintroduce the big rodent.

But before deciding whether to go ahead, the agency launched four months of consultation. It needs to allay the fears of some landowners, anglers and foresters who worry that beavers' effect on trees and waterways might hit them in the pocket.

If the species is reintroduced from continental Europe, probably from Scandinavia, it will be the most ambitious such exercise ever attempted in Britain. Nothing near the beaver's size has ever been deliberately brought back to these islands again by man after being persecuted into extinction.

SNH thinks Scotland could support a population of up to 1,000 beavers in the central Highlands, along the rivers Lomond, Ness,

Spey, Try, Dee, Don and their tributaries without the need to create any extra habitat.

SNH has spent two years researching whether it was feasible to bring back the beaver, and has concluded that it is. Chairman Magnus Magnusson said: "We need to be assured that the idea is acceptable to the people of Scotland."

A lengthy consultation document says that the reintroduction would "restore a missing element of our natural heritage". The species' remarkable abilities in felling trees and building dams could benefit other wildlife and create new wetland habitat. SNH is also convinced that what it calls "beaver-watching opportunities" would boost tourism.

The proposal has been backed by the Forestry Commission and the Scottish Wildlife Trust, a charity, which has offered one of its reserves to become home to the beaver.

If, after the consultation, SNH is still keen to press ahead, it will need to apply for a licence to bring in the European beavers from Donald Dewar, Secretary of State for Scotland. The operation and follow-up monitoring will cost more than £100,000.

The dam builders

Beavers build dams from branches, trunks, mud and stones mainly to keep their burrow and nesting chamber entrance below water level. They do not always build dams, but when they do it creates large ponds and small lakes along streams. They also dig canals and construct low lodges on riverbanks.

They are excellent swimmers, with webbed hind feet, a flat, muscular tail and waterproof fur.

There are two species, the North American and the European. The latter weighs up to 20kg. They eat grass, herbs and shrubs through the summer, and the bark of broad-leaved trees, especially birch and aspen, in winter. One beaver is estimated to fell two tons of timber a year in its quest for food, but they do not attack conifers.

Their numbers were drastically reduced across Europe by hunting for their fur and the musk from their anal scent gland, which had medicinal uses. Since 1920 several reintroductions have been carried out; half have proved successful.

Whitehall sets tough targets on expulsions

By Ben Russell
Education Correspondent

LOCAL authorities will have to set tough targets for cutting the number of expulsions under a new government drive, announced yesterday, to improve bad behaviour in schools.

Estelle Morris, the education minister, said that to combat the spiralling numbers of children suspended or expelled, education officers should recruit and work alongside police, social workers and health experts.

Councils will have to publish plans for keeping problem pupils in school, and for dealing with those who have been expelled. Ministers hope to encourage authorities to follow the example of partnership projects involving the different agencies, such as those pioneered in Birmingham and Leeds, which have attempted to head off problems with pupils

before they are thrown out of school for good. Ministers also want councils to track expelled pupils' progress and to try to get the children back into mainstream education.

In Leeds, schools operate an early warning system, including a database to monitor truancy and bad behaviour, while in Birmingham, teachers provide mentors for boys at risk of expulsion.

Ms Morris said: "Rising numbers of permanent exclusions are of real concern. There were 12,500 exclusions in 1995-96, an increase of 1,400 over the previous year. We are determined to achieve a reduction in levels of exclusion and truancy."

She added: "There will always be some pupils with behavioural difficulties who will be excluded... I also expect plans to include clear and effective arrangements for educating these pupils, keeping track of their progress when they are out of school, and reintegrating them into mainstream schools where and when appropriate."

But Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, is not in favour of the move. "The idea is wholly misconceived and entirely inappropriate," he said. "Cases for expulsion should be judged on their merits, not on whether artificial targets will be met."

"This wholly unrealistic attitude to serious pupil discipline, if it prevails, will act as a serious deterrent for young people considering teaching as a career."

Local authority leaders warned that expulsions could increase still further if proposed changes to regulations were not reversed. The School Standards Bill removes the right of local authorities to veto expulsions, a change which has prompted anger among council leaders.

Ministers are currently considering amending the Bill to make schools consult local education officers during a 14-day cooling off period before expulsions go ahead.

Graham Lane, education chairman of the Local Government Association, said: "I think this could reduce or certainly stabilise exclusions. If the Government does not adopt the system they will quadruple the exclusions."

Education officers acknowledge that children face an uphill task in getting another school place after they have been expelled. For many the alternative is a few hours a week teaching at home, or a place at a special referral centre.

Local authority leaders say that half a day's home tuition a week can be as expensive as a full-time place at school, while sending a child to a referral centre costs up to £12,000 a year.

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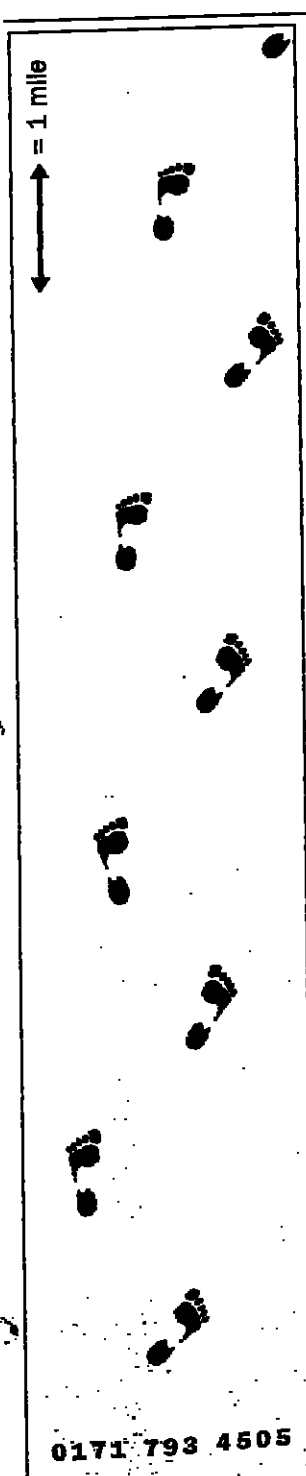
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OUT NOW

French right jumps into bed with Le Pen

FRANCE faces a potentially explosive crisis today which could transform the country's political landscape in dangerous and unpredictable ways.

Bowing to an open revolt by their own members, the French centre-right parties appeared ready last night to perform a moral and political volte-face and permit local alliances with the ultra-right National Front.

This would break a 10-year philosophical and strategic taboo on dealings with Jean-Marie Le Pen's ultra-nationalist and covertly racist party.

The Socialist Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, solemnly warned the "traditional" right against taking such a step, which, he said, would threaten democracy and the Republic itself. The bishop of Nîmes, in the south of France, said deals with the NF would amount to "prostitution". The centre-left newspaper *Le Monde* reported that the French "traditional" right was in a state of "utter panic", following local election losses last weekend. If it made deals with the NF when regional assemblies meet all over France today, it would have reached its "darkest day". In a signed front-page editorial, the paper's editor, Jean-Marie

Change ends taboo on deals with racist party John Lichfield, in Paris, reports

Colombani, compared the fast-moving muddle of recent days to the crises which had brought down French democratic institutions in the past. It might even become necessary, he said, to abandon the "devastated landscape" of the Fifth Republic and move to a new political system, as Italy had recently done.

The immediate issue at stake is the fate of maybe half a dozen regional governments, which are, in themselves, of limited political importance. The opaque results of a regional election last Sunday have precipitated a crisis between the weak and discredited leadership of the parties of the "respectable right" and their own grassroots members: a crisis which has been long in the making.

On Sunday, a coalition of the left topped the poll in 11 out of 21 regions in France proper but won a full majority in only one. In the other regions there was a right-wing "majority" but a majority split between the "traditional right", the Gaullist RPR and the smaller centre-right parties grouped in the

UDF, and the National Front. Before the elections, centre-right leaders swore that they would make no deals with the NF to stay in power in any region. Where the left topped the poll, it would be allowed to form a minority government.

In at least five regions local Gaullist and UDF leaders have repudiated this promise. They have entered sometimes secret, and sometimes open, negotiations with the NF for ultra-right support when the regional assemblies meet to choose their presidents today.

Despite dire warnings, and the threat of expulsion, already carried out against one former general secretary of the RPR, it became clear yesterday that deals were going ahead at local level in Languedoc-Roussillon, Picardy, Upper Normandy, Burgundy, the Pyrenees and, possibly, the greater Paris area, the Ile-de-France.

Local leaders were summoned to Paris yesterday to discuss ways of halting this insurrection. Officially, the RPR and UDF re-stated their

old position after the meeting: no regional governments would be formed with NF support. *Le Monde* reported, however, that centre-right leaders had been forced secretly to accept a compromise. There would be no formal deals with the NF; but if centre-right regional presidents were mysteriously elected with far-right votes, that would be accepted. The alternative, it was feared, was outright revolt.

There were similar accords with a then weaker NF in the late 1980s, which are generally reckoned to have boosted the Front and damaged the traditional right. There have been similar rows between the centre-right leaders and the grassroots in recent years. The present crisis is made more explosive by two factors.

First, there is the strength of the Front which has now taken 15 per cent of the vote in each of the last three nationwide polls. Second, there are the weakness and internal dissensions of the RPR and UDF, which have not recovered from the humiliating defeat in parliamentary elections last year. Deals with the NF, intended to keep the French centre-right parties together, could just as easily split them apart.



Flag-waving: After promising not to, the right may ally with Le Pen

Photograph: Charles Pataiu/Reuters

Germans seek atonement, but final solution eludes them

By Imre Karacs
in Bonn



Günter Grass: Declared war on proposed monument

GERMAN efforts to find a fitting display of atonement for the Holocaust are in danger of degenerating into a farce. Not for the first time, the designs of the monument to be erected in Berlin in memory of the victims of the Final Solution have united politicians and the chattering classes in opposition.

Only weeks away from the decision, Berlin's mayor, Eberhard Diepgen, yesterday threw his weight behind those urging

a pause for thought. In an interview with *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, Mr Diepgen complained that not one of the four short-listed designs had convinced him that it was "possible to deal with this horror artistically".

The mayor, who heads a Christian Democrat-led coalition in the city in partnership with the Social Democrats, was scathing about the version closest to the heart of the Chancellor, Helmut Kohl. After vetoing the giant tombstone that had won the first artistic competition, Mr Kohl is back-

ing an equally vast labyrinth of 4,000 concrete pillars devised by two Americans, Richard Serra and Peter Eisenman. Those walking through the narrow passages, to be erected on the site of Hitler's devastated chancellery, are supposed to feel overwhelmed and disorientated. But Mr Diepgen said all he could see in this design was "monumentality", and virtually no reference to the Holocaust.

"It could be a memorial for a lot of things," he said. All four entries lying in front of the panel of independent judges had

more to say "about the inner conflicts of today's generation in relation to their parents" than about Nazi crimes.

The other options are a plan by Jochem Gerz to install 39 poles inscribed with the word "Why" in different languages; a broken wall designed by Daniel Libeskind; and 18 massive sandstone blocks, by Gesien Weinmiller, which, viewed from a certain angle, will coalesce into an abstract image of the Star of David.

Mr Kohl is urging a quick solution so that after 10 years of

debate work can begin. The ground-breaking ceremony, on former no-man's land between the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag, is set for January 1999, the 54th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

If there is a further twist to this long-running saga, it could rob the city of the central monument it allegedly needs when the government returns to the capital in 1999. But that might not be a bad thing, argue the project's opponents, pointing to the numerous statues, museums and cemeteries already hon-

ouring Nazi victims. Intellectuals who started the campaign for the mother of all memorials, "the final solution to the Final Solution", have turned against the project, recoiling at the "monumental clichés" that have sprung from the fertile minds of fellow artists.

The writer Günter Grass, self-appointed conscience of the nation and former leading monumentalist, press-ganged 18 other intellectuals earlier this year into an "open letter" declaring war on the latest outbursts of architectural pathos.

Mayor Diepgen has travelled to Israel to canvass opinions, only to find indifference. The Jewish community in Germany is divided. Berlin's Jews cannot decide whether they should be flattered or repelled by such a grandiose scheme, not dissimilar in scale to the art of the Third Reich.

"I don't need this monument," says Ignatz Bubis, leader of the Jewish community in Germany. Whether Jews were able to live without it was never in doubt. The real question is: can Germans?

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Joe Public,
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becomes his
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Sharon

Anger as Hong Kong press chief beats law

By Stephen Vines
in Hong Kong

ARE NEWSPAPER proprietors above the law in Hong Kong? Or does this only apply to those serving on official Chinese bodies?

These questions arise following the appearance in court yesterday of three newspaper executives accused of a conspiracy to defraud, by artificially inflating the circulation figures of the English-language *Hong Kong Standard* newspaper.

The executives were charged after an investigation by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), which found that they had conspired with Sally Aw Sian, the newspaper's owner, to defraud the advertisers. However, no charges were laid against Ms Aw, one of Hong Kong's best-known newspaper owners - and a prominent member of the Chinese People's Consultative Committee, a political advisory organ of the Chinese government.

Although the ICAC has made public its allegation against Ms Aw, the Department of Justice has declined to act. This has caused uproar in Hong Kong, where preserving the rule of law is seen widely as a litmus test of the credibility of the post-colonial administration.

Demonstrators gathered outside the Department of Justice's office yesterday to protest. Martin Lee, the leader of the Democratic Party, said the failure to prosecute "cries out for an explanation".

Even normally docile members of the non-elected Provisional Legislature have voiced

their misgivings and will be holding a meeting with Elise Leung, the Secretary of Justice, next Monday to seek an explanation.

Yesterday, Ms Leung's office issued a statement saying "this department does not consider the personal connections or political status of any suspect. In this particular case, these principles have been scrupulously observed".

Ms Aw controls the Sing Tao publishing empire which used to back the staunchly anti-Communist government in Taiwan. It switched support to Peking more than a decade ago. The Sing Tao group then became the first overseas publisher allowed to publish a newspaper in mainland China.

The situation is further complicated by the strong links between Ms Aw's family and Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's Chief Executive. His family also used to be firm supporters of Taiwan and he sat on the Sing Tao board of directors for eight years.

Mr Tung declined to comment directly on the case but said, "the decision to prosecute or not rests entirely with the Secretary for Justice".

Last week, Mr Tung provoked protests when he dismissed another controversial decision. This time, it was not to prosecute the New China News Agency, which used to act as Peking's *de facto* embassy when Hong Kong was still a British colony and was widely believed to monitor the political stance of Hong Kong people.

The agency had breached the privacy laws but did not even get a reprimand. Mr Tung said that the matter was a mere "technicality".



Women mourning yesterday over the body of Albanian Qerim Murqi, 52, who was killed by Serbian police on Wednesday during a rally in Pec, 50 miles west of the Kosovo capital, Pristina. Tension has been high in the Kosovo region since the Serbian police launched a brutal crackdown against ethnic Albanians earlier this month.

Photograph: Anja Niedringhaus

Pass the hairdryer, my peiga is just too much

ROME DIARY



Andrew Gumbel

The Italians have got a thing about hair. I know this because a few years ago there was an advert on television for dandruff shampoo, or split ends, in which two glamorous professional women (the sort of people the papers here like to call *donna manager* to make them sound efficient and important) were exchanging small talk across their desks.

"Che stress!" the first one sighed melodramatically, even though she looked drop-dead gorgeous and unruffled by life's little vicissitudes.

"What is it? Your computer?" asked the other. "No, it's my hair!"

Although this advert seemed hilarious, the Italians I knew thought it was a perfectly ordinary conversation for two immaculate fake blondes to be

having in the course of a morning's work. Can't stop worrying about her hair? That sounds perfectly plausible to us, they said.

I also know the Italians have a thing about hair because of a curious recent opinion poll conducted by the state broadcasting network teletext service, in which viewers were asked to name their favourite pastime.

The outright winner, picked by 68 per cent of respondents, was going for a hairdo.

Not watching football, not eating pasta, but a hairdo. I have visions of legions of Italians staring at themselves in the mirror each morning and wondering how many more days they will have to wait before they can at last justify another scintillating trip to the hairdressers.

At last I understand why my own barber makes no effort to lure me in when I pass his shop. He must assume I'll be leaping into his reclining seat as soon as I can slot it in to my hectic schedule.

After all, the establishments near my house are usually brimming with customers demanding a cut, or blonde highlights, or just a "do", known in Italian as a *peiga*. To this Anglo-Saxon sensibility, a *peiga* is hell on a head - lots of useless bouffant and application of gel, resulting in a confection that doesn't so much resemble hair as an 18th-century wig. But Italians love it, and are apparently willing to pay extortionate sums to have one as often as possible (my wife has had to scour every hair salon in central Rome to find one that

will cut her hair without insisting on the *peiga* too).

So diffuse is the culture of the *peiga* that one specialist salon operating near our house until recently even offered them to dogs. Outside, the shop sign announced canine stripping, trimming, *toelenaggio* and a host of other services, while inside the hapless pooches were chained to a medieval wash-basin, given the once-over with shears, shampoo, conditioner and blowdryer, and then, the ordeal over, were served a congratulatory bowl of Weetabix out of industrial-sized sacks.

I have to confess my understanding of the Italian obsession with hair is probably more acute because I used to have a thing about hair myself. A couple of years ago, I became convinced I was losing great clumps of it. A kindly doctor eventually laughed in my face and told me to take life a little easier, but for a while I was scrupulously examining the manes of all around me to see who did, and who did not, have a Hair Loss Problem.

I recall a trip to Palermo. Sicilians are on average shorter than most Italians, so I could

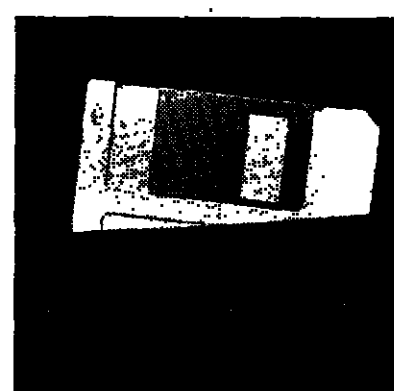
gaze down on their scalps with ease. I failed to enlighten myself much on my own hair loss, but I did see the most extraordinary parade of hairdressing artistry, particularly among the men - dark curls perfectly gelled into place, thinning patches brilliantly camouflaged with what meagre streaks were still available. I saw evidence of hours of painstaking labour, of visits to specialists, of scores of bottles on bathroom counters, of combs surreptitiously pulled out for little touch-ups. It had to be a labour of love.

And where there is love there may be fear. I suspect Italians are also scared stiff by the whole subject. This is a country where ap-

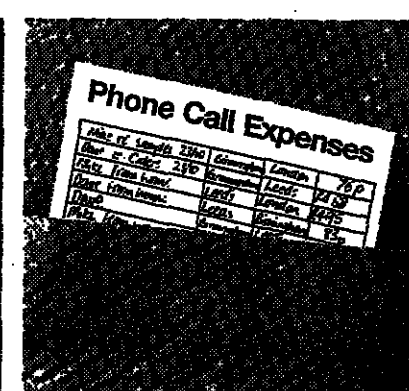
pearance is not only of paramount importance, but one where the right hairdo requires a balancing act of singular delicacy. Look too young and nobody will take you seriously. Look too old and your *bella figura* is shot to pieces. Thus the media magnate turned politician, Silvio Berlusconi, always insists on being photographed from his right (he looks less bald that way). Young people wanting to get ahead, meanwhile, either have their hair cropped conservatively short (men), or else (women) go in for the curls-and-blowdry jobs one might have expected of their grandmothers. Foreigners like me can't hope to compete with this capillary obsession. I'm waiting for hats to come back into fashion.



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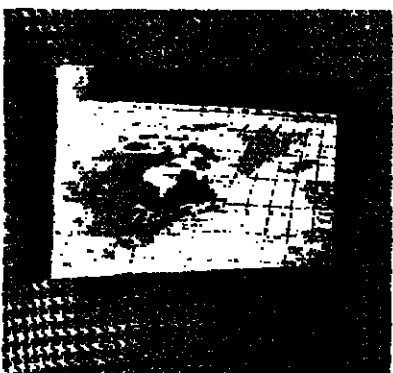


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سونا من الامل

Rugby boss forces Mandela into court

By Mary Braid
in Johannesburg

THE BITTER relations between the South African government and national rugby boss Dr Louis Luyt plummeted to new depths yesterday when an angry President Nelson Mandela became the first head of state forced to defend his political actions in court.

Before taking the witness stand at Pretoria High Court, President Mandela said his blood boiled at being forced into the chamber by the controversial Dr Luyt to be grilled about his decision to set up a commission to investigate alleged racism, graft and nepotism in rugby, the game Dr Luyt has been accused of operating like a personal fiefdom.

Before taking the stand, the president said he had grave reservations about the unprecedented order for him to appear in court because it might open floodgates by which all presidential decisions might be challenged and government undermined.

The summons to the president, which has shocked many legal experts, was issued by Judge William de Villiers. The president's advisers argue that the judge is right-wing and reactionary, pointing out that he opposed the admission of blacks to the Pretoria Bar Council until the early 1980s and was conservative in apartheid era political trials.

Yesterday, Dr Luyt and President Mandela shook hands and chatted during intervals. But the heady early days of the new democracy when rugby proved a unifying force were



Scrum down: President Mandela, surrounded by bodyguards and journalists at Pretoria High Court, said his blood boiled at being called to court

Photograph: AFP

the enemy" — rugby is a near religion to Afrikaners. Once he said Dr Luyt had played a "critical" role in transforming rugby. Now little was being done to bring rugby to the townships.

"I would never have imagined that Louis would be so insensitive, ungrateful and disrespectful to say when I gave my affidavit [submitted earlier to the court] I was lying," said the president, standing just feet from Dr Luyt.

Fink Haysom, President Mandela's legal adviser, said he could find no precedent within or outside South Africa for a president being called to court in this manner. He said he was appalled that President Mandela's written affidavit was being questioned. It was tantamount to saying the president was lying under oath.

The president's supporters, who packed the court, regarded the entire proceeding as disrespectful and a little humiliating to Mr Mandela.

The president said he was attending out of respect for the administration of justice. But it was clear he was keen to demonstrate openness. But why, he asked Judge Villiers, was Dr Luyt resisting transparency. "It gives the message he is hiding something," he said.

long gone and there was no mistaking the underlying animosity.

Dr Luyt has accused sports minister Steve Tshwete of conducting a vendetta against him and is arguing in court that President Mandela did not properly consider the arguments for a commission but simply

rubber stamped Mr Tshwete's decision. He is also insisting that a sport which had played such a huge role in nation building could not be seen as a private matter, particularly when a cloud of suspicion hung over those who ran it. He said that Sarfu could not be left to regulate itself when internal democracy

seemed lacking. "The feeling is that Louis is a pitiless dictator," South Africa's first democratically elected president told the court. "No one can stand up to him."

President Mandela said he had risked his political future after his release by promoting "the game of

correct head again with a question about whether the 4 June 1989 crackdown was a "historical burden" for the new government announced at the National People's Congress (NPC), which ended yesterday. Mr Zhu, who in 1989 was mayor of Shanghai, is credited with calming protesters in the city by promising not to send in the army. Yesterday he took the official line on the "resolute" measures which "stabilised" the country. The party had already "drawn a correct conclusion on that matter," he said.

The future gave Mr Zhu more scope to find his own words. He was asked when China's president and prime minister might be elected by

universal suffrage. "Of course I'm in favour of democratic election," he said, praising village elections and elections inside enterprises. But the election of China's leaders involved "political restructuring, so that should be done according to legal procedures." And as for the timing: "It's hard now for me to predict when such an election can take place."

The NPC delegates themselves yesterday put on an unusual show of what voting can be like. When the results of a vote on the report from the Supreme People's Procuratorate flashed up on the board, a record 44 per cent of delegates had said "no", or abstained. This was the highest

protest vote recorded in the normally rubber-stamp NPC. These protests are seen as voicing widespread complaints about crime and corruption.

Mr Zhu reiterated his goals of overhauling state businesses and the creaking financial system and cutting the number of central government civil servants by half by the end of this year. And he joked that his picture on the cover of *Time* was "more good-looking" than the one in *Newsweek*, a slick way of letting the world know that he reads such international publications. The only thing he feared was letting down the people. "I will devote myself to the people and the country until the last day of my life," he said.

China shocked as PM shoots from the hip

By Teresa Poole
in Peking

IN A BREAKTHROUGH for Chinese communists, the new prime minister yesterday showed that the medium really can be the message.

Zhu Rongji, with humour and only minimal propaganda rhetoric, took to the stage for a live-broadcast press conference at which he fielded questions on the pro-democracy protests in 1989, and on elections in China. He promised to "blaze my trail" with a bold programme including the overhaul of industry, the civil and medical services, financial systems, and housing.

The performance of Mr Zhu, 69,

represented a seismic shift from his predecessor, the hardline Li Peng. Mr Li's press occasions have involved pre-selected journalists asking pre-cleared questions. Mr Zhu took anything that came his way, an approach which has not been seen since before 1989.

Nor would many of the topics discussed normally be aired on Chinese television. Mr Zhu was asked about 1958, when he was condemned as a "rightist" for criticising the Communist government and sent to the countryside. "I have learned a lot from that experience," he said. "But that experience was also unpleasant, so I don't want to mention that now."

The past reared its politically in-



Zhu: Praised moves over greater democracy

Serbs to pull out forces

The Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milosevic, agreed to withdraw his special forces from Kosovo, the German and French foreign ministers said. The French minister, Hubert Vedrine, said he supports a negotiated settlement of the Kosovo crisis with Kosovo Albanian leaders. Mr Milosevic said some of the Serb forces that killed 80 ethnic Albanians in retaliation for the deaths of four Serb policemen in February had already been withdrawn. —AP, Belgrade

Fall-out in Germany

A train carrying spent nuclear fuel began its controversial journey across Germany towards a waste-disposal site. A force of 20,000 police and troops are expected to protect the convoy, whose progress environmentalists have sworn to disrupt. The annual trip of waste to dumps in the north has become the focus of protests against the nuclear industry. Last year 20,000 environmentalists delayed the journey by undermining roads and chaining themselves to rails. This year the convoy left two days early and is racing to reach the Westphalian town of Ahaus before the gathering army of protesters. —Inre Karacs, Bonn

Chinese going into orbit

China plans to launch a manned spacecraft within the next few years. "We will [also] launch a small lunar probe," Ma Xingrui, vice-president of the Chinese Academy of Space Technology, told an international meeting of space scientists.

—Teresa Poole, Peking

American dies in all-out fight

A thirty-year-old American, Doug Dodge, a father of five, collapsed with fatal injuries after taking part in what was billed as "a fight without rules" in Kiev, capital of Ukraine.

—Phil Reeves, Moscow

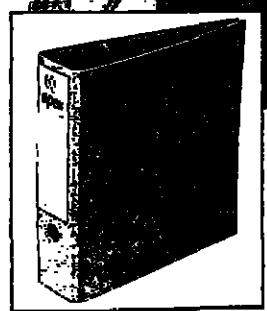
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Alan Murdoch finds a deserted Kerry village becoming an artistic haven. Photographs by Brian Harris

George
Hitchings



Sanctuary: The uninhabited village of Ballinskelligs with one of the restored houses (right) which have become homes to hundreds of international artists since 1991

On the shores of inspiration

marr Rainbow

AGAINST the Ring of Kerry's epic landscape of slate-grey cliffs and vast sweeping valleys, scattered cottages crouch low against blasting gales on steep slopes. This is not conventional beauty, but something more invigorating, wilder, resonant of Atlantic power. Small wonder then that this stark scenery should so forcefully grip the imaginations of artists.

Since its foundation stone was laid in 1991 by then-Taoiseach Charles Haughey over 180 have now visited, living and working in the embryonic community of Cill Rialaig on the western tip of the Ring, close to the haunting triangular Skelligs.

Cill Rialaig had been in steady decline since the potato famine 150 years ago. Now there are plans for half of the settlement's original 14 ruined cottages to be renovated, with the two already completed available free to visiting artists. Painters, enraptured by the unique morning light, work beneath a glass roof. Yards from the cliff edge, the dwellings face directly out into the Atlantic.

Anne Kampmann, currently visiting from Norway, paints moody abstract works. Walking the nearby headlands, she feels "the pressure of history here. I think the spirit is here in a very heavy way."

The project was the brainchild of Dublin publisher Noelle Campbell-Sharp, a regular visitor down the years. A busy socialite and sometime rock band manager, she traces the origins of the project to an unlikely celebrity.

"If it hadn't been for Robert Maxwell nothing would have happened," she confesses. Campbell-Sharp, an energetic super-saleswoman became known as the only person ever to make money out of the bouncing Czech, after selling him her stable of up-market women's glossy magazines, among them *Irish Tatler* and *Social And Personal*. Dublin will promptly rename her "Razor-Sharp Noelle".

Maxwell went to his grave before her payment was completed. She retreated to Kerry "to lick my wounds". It was then she conceived her rejuvenation plan.

She admits many were initially wary of "this mad woman from Dublin". She, after all, used to promote her coffee-



Approval: Vi Lawlor, 75, a wealthy widow and socialite, celebrates with an Irish coffee at the gallery opening in Ballinskelligs



Celebration: The evening flows into the small hours and there is no sign of an end to the set dancing in the local bar



Exertion: American artist Joan Boryto runs at 7am using rocks for weights through the abandoned village. Across the bay a large international art gallery is planned for Waterville, which, it is hoped, will rival the Tate at St Ives



The finished work Paintings of New England (top) and Ballinskelligs (bottom) by Joan Boryto

'The pressure of history is here. And the spirit is here'



The fruits: Writer Terry Keane at the new gallery with Noelle Campbell-Sharp in the background

table reading for the hunting classes, while her elegant vintage Bentley was a familiar sight double-parked outside the Shelbourne Hotel, prime watering hole of the tiana set. She did manage to squeeze Irish high-society for donations through golf-classics and auctions. Rebuilding the first two cottages cost £50,000 each.

The artists come from as far afield as Argentina, Russia, and Italy. A tradition has arisen at Cill Rialaig of leaving behind a work of art produced there, which is sold to raise funds. Italy's 1996 painter of the year, Aurelio Caminati, left an entire summer's output. The outward influence is visible in Irish-related exhibitions now running in Milan, Genoa, Glasgow and Cornwall.

The last, most ambitious venture is a large international art gallery planned for Waterville, five miles across Ballinskelligs Bay, paralleling the Tate at St Ives.

Last Saturday, a mile from the village in the project's impressive new gallery-restaurant with adjacent workshops, Campbell-Sharp brought her contrasting metropolitan and country circles together. To open a group show, amid intense local interest, she lured down a real celebrity in the form of Terry Keane, Dublin's principal gossip writer and "close friend" of Charles Haughey ("Sweetie" in her weekly newspaper column). Last week a Dublin magazine named her "the sexiest woman in Ireland".

The retinue also included the scarlet-clad Vi Lawlor, 75-year-old good-time girl and wealthy widow with a liking for vintage "shampoo", dancing on tables, who resorts to a Rolls-Royce for race meetings when the helicopter is booked up.

With Campbell-Sharp in Dublin (running a gallery and planning a cigar-and-wine club) a board involving Kerry business and professional figures run the art project. Local people have warmed to it. Tom Horgan, the owner of a small caravan park, says, "We want quality tourism, not to destroy the place", while GP Derry Gibson says "Psychologically, it is important to have such wonderful art here, to show there is something happening".

Inquiries to: The Cill Rialaig Project, Ballinskelligs, County Kerry, Ireland. Fax: 00353 66 79324.

صلى الله عليه وسلم

George Hitchings

GEORGE HITCHINGS was an outstanding discoverer of medicines which have given benefit to sufferers all over the world. He devised Daraprim for malaria and Zyloric for gout, both exceptional remedies which have stood the test of time; but the main application of his work was in cancer chemotherapy.

Hitchings was born in Hingham, Washington, in 1905. His family was prominent in ship-building, but he decided early to devote his life to a search for new medicines. He studied Biochemistry for bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Washington, and continued to work for his PhD from Harvard.

In 1942 he joined the American laboratories of the firm of Burroughs Wellcome (now part of Glaxo Wellcome) in Tuckahoe, New York, where he developed the programme of his life work. Scientists in those laboratories had an exceptional and enviable freedom to decide for themselves what to work on and how to work on it. Hitchings, one of the few scientists of the time to recognise the importance of deoxyribonucleic acid or DNA in life processes, chose to study purines and pyrimidines, the building blocks of DNA.

He and his research partner Gertrude Eliot exploited the then recently established principle of competitive antagonism and made drugs which would arrest the multiplication of specific cells, either of an invading parasite or of a cancer.

The enormous progress in the next quarter of a century provided the medicines which enabled Burroughs Wellcome to become a major pharmaceutical company. In Hitchings's own words, "The results are cumulative; the solution of one problem creates the tools and understanding that facilitate the solution of the next problem."

The first important success was the anti-malarial drug Daraprim or pyrimethamine, which was tested in the Wellcome Institute of Tropical Medicine in London and in the tropics.

This very valuable discovery was, however, a diversion from the primary interest of finding anti-cancer drugs. The compound 6-mercaptopurine was made and found to cause remissions in children with certain types of leukaemia. Very few anti-cancer drugs were known at the time, and the success, although limited, was a great encouragement to Hitchings and Eliot's line of work.

Studies of the metabolic fate of purines suggested an effective treatment for gout. The result was an outstanding success, the drug Zyloric, or allopurinol, remarkably free from unwanted effects, and of undoubted benefit in preventing the very painful attacks of the disease.

While these discoveries were being made and the more basic research which supported them was continuing, the science of immunology was growing fast. The idea that immune responses depended on division of particular cells suggested that anti-cancer drugs might act also as immunosuppressants. Mercaptopurine was found to stop immune responses in rabbits, and further compounds were developed, resulting in the immunosuppressant azathioprine, sometimes described as the drug which made organ transplantation possible.

By this time Hitchings had a world-wide reputation. In 1967 Burroughs Wellcome appointed him as Vice-President



Hitchings: Nobel prizewinner for medicine in 1988 and a quiet but formidable man of integrity and great kindness

of Research. He was then involved in planning new research laboratories for the company's move to Research Triangle Park in North Carolina. Here he led a large and flourishing department in which outstanding chemotherapeutic discoveries continued to be made, including drugs for the treatment of herpes and AIDS.

In 1976 he was elected as a Foreign Member of the Royal Society of London; in 1977 he was inducted into the US National Academy of Science; in 1978 he received the Annual Award of the American Cancer Society. In 1988 he and Gertrude Eliot shared the Nobel Prize in Medicine with the British pharmacologist Sir James Black.

Hitchings continued to be most knowledgeable gardener. His silences could be embarrassing, and the concentration of his thought was sometimes overpowering, but what came from it was profoundly worth hearing.

Miles Weatherall

George Herbert Hitchings, chemist, born Hingham, Washington 18 April 1905; Teaching Fellow, Washington University 1926-28; Teaching Fellow, Harvard University 1928-34; Instructor and Tutor 1932-36; Research Fellow 1934-36; Associate 1936-39; Senior Instructor, Western Reserve University 1939-42; Biochemist, Burroughs Wellcome Co 1942-46; Chief Biochemist 1946-55; Associate Research Director 1955-63; Research Director (Chemotherapy Division) 1963-67; Vice-President in Charge of Research 1967-75; Director 1967-77; Scientist Emeritus and Consultant 1975-98; Professor of Pharmacology, Brown University 1968-80; Staff, Department of Medicine, Roger Williams General Hospital 1970-80; Adjunct Professor of Pharmacology and Adjunct Professor of Experimental Medicine, Duke University 1970-85; President, Burroughs Wellcome Fund 1971-90; Director 1971-94; Adjunct Professor of Pharmacology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 1972-85; Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine (jointly with Gertrude Eliot and Sir James Black) 1988; married 1933 Beverly Reimer (died 1985; one son, one daughter); 1989 Joyce Shaver; died Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27 February 1998.

Barbara Haq

THE MOVEMENT for Colonial Freedom (MCF) - founded by the Labour parliamentarian and peace campaigner Fenner Brockway in 1954, and today known as Liberation - was at the heart of organised support for colonial revolution in the 1950s and 1960s.

Its pioneering work led to the establishment of organisations such as Anti-Apartheid, War on Want, and the British Council for Peace in Vietnam, among others. Barbara Haq was its key organiser for most of this period, working for the movement from 1958 until she resigned in 1973, after more than a decade as General Secretary.

The daughter of Edward Lapwood Green, the Chief Examiner of Estate Duty, she might have chosen other paths, but her interest in music brought her into contact with left-wing musicians. As a result, she joined the Communist Party during the Second World War and worked for its London District Office with anti-colonial rebels and overseas students.

One of these, Islam al Haq, from an Indian Muslim family, she married. After the birth of two daughters and a son, they left for Pakistan in 1954. Barbara Haq, however, suffered from ulcerative colitis, which had led her to lose three years of schooling, and was forced to return to Britain with the children in 1956 for medical attention. Her husband remained in Pakistan.

Her knowledge, dedication and secretarial skills were soon recognised and, after being seconded for a period to act as Secretary to the newly formed British Council for Peace in Vietnam, she succeeded John Eher as Secretary of MCF in 1962. She became a confidant of Fenner Brockway, Bob Edwards and other parliamentarians and mobilised rank-and-file support for the causes they embraced. Opposing war in Vietnam and Nigeria, denouncing massacres in Indonesia, fighting apartheid in southern Africa, supporting the cause of freedom in colonial countries, rallying racism's opponents in Britain and action against world hunger were some of the issues on the agenda.

Haq's life was dominated by the work of convening conferences, organising demonstrations, producing the MCF journal *Colonial Freedom News*, providing briefings, typing stencils at an incredible speed, turning the duplicator handle, stuffing envelopes and raising funds. Occasionally she undertook overseas missions herself, like one around 1970 to Sudan to try to achieve understanding between north and south. Her pay was a pittance and she never sought personal publicity or self-advancement. The cause was all that mattered.

Stanley Newsom

Barbara McKay Green, campaigner; born London 8 March 1918; Secretary, Movement for Colonial Freedom 1962-73; married 1942 Islam al Haq (died 1993; one son, one daughter, and one daughter deceased); died London 2 March 1998.



Haq: dedicated to the cause

Bernarr Rainbow

BERNARR RAINBOW was recognised in Britain and abroad as the leading historian in the field of musical education.

A successful schoolteacher and director of music, he was also a man of insatiable curiosity who amassed a vast collection of historical books and materials. In middle age he became a punctilious scholar, completing two research degrees, but was always anxious to make his discoveries widely available for the benefit of colleagues and their pupils.

Rainbow was born in London in 1914, and went to Rutish School, Merton; his father was Curator of Pictures at Hampton Court Palace. Whilst still at school he was appointed to his first post as organist and choirmaster at St James's, Merton, and at Trinity College of Music, from 1933 to 1939, he was a pupil of the academic harmony pedagogue Dr William Lovelock. As with many of his generation, Rainbow's studies were interrupted by the Second World War. He was not able to



Rainbow: president

proceed with his London degree. Instead he served with the Army in North Africa and Italy, until he was invalided out in 1944.

Soon after returning, Rainbow was appointed Organist and Choirmaster of High Wycombe Parish Church and Senior Music Master at the Royal Grammar School. But he really got into his stride as a historiographer of music education after he was appointed Director of Music at the College of St Mark and St John

in Chelsea in 1952, which became connected to the Institute of Education at London University.

At the time, before the days of university expansion, this Church of England teacher training college was a lively intellectual environment with principals such as Michael Roberts and later A.A. Evans. Further literary connections included the poets Thomas Blackburn and John Heath-Stubbs, who both taught there.

On the musical side, Rainbow had an instinct for new developments, although he felt more at home in earlier centuries and was suspicious of mere novelty. In the early 1960s, at a time when Peter Maxwell Davies was amazing everyone with what his pupils at Cirencester Grammar School could do, Rainbow appointed me, fresh from studying and working in New York, and soon after George Self and Brian Dennis. When I went for interview I improvised on the chapel organ: Rainbow later told me it was then that he was determined to

appoint me since he could hardly wait to see the expression on the Principal's face during the chapel services.

Rainbow's work at St Mark and St John confirmed the average music teacher's need for guidance. So he published his first book, *Music in the Classroom*, in 1956, and then edited a *Handbook for Music Teachers* in 1964, which went through two more editions.

A profound influence on Rainbow, which moved him into his own unique areas of historical musicology, was a discovery he made in 1953 when rummaging in the basement at the college. He found early service sheets which showed that, from its foundation in 1840, the chapel of St Mark's College, Chelsea (as it then was), played a vital role in the choral revival within the Anglican Church. A repertoire of Tallis, Byrd, Gibbons, Palestrina and Victoria was not the usual cathedral fodder at that time.

Rainbow's predecessors included the Rev Thomas Helmore, the college's first

precentor, and John Hullah, who pioneered methods of teaching singing to large classes.

As Rainbow investigated the musical life of church and school in 19th-century England, it became increasingly clear that the German sobriquet "The Land Without Music" was demonstrably unjustified. So he provocatively threw this down as the title of his first scholarly book exploring musical education in England from 1800 to 1860 in terms of its continental antecedents. Three years later, in 1970, Rainbow's *The Choral Revival in the Anglican Church, 1839-1892* appeared, where he developed further his particular flair for relating musical practice to church politics in a fascinating way.

Rainbow wrote a short critical biography of John Curwen (1816-1880), the inventor of the tonic sol-fa method of teaching sight-singing and founded the Curwen Institute in 1978 to promote Curwen's principles. These anticipated the methods much later put

into practice in Hungary, as Kodály himself admitted.

Rainbow's infectious enthusiasm for all he studied, carried him on into generously making his sources available too. In retirement during the 1980s he edited some 25 classic texts in music education from originals in various languages as *Classic Texts in Music Education*. But Rainbow's magnum opus, which brings together all his involvements and strides across many centuries, is *Music in Educational Thought and Practice* (1989).

This near 400-page treatise starts with Ancient Greece and Rome and ends in the mid-1980s. After tracing centuries of methods of teaching notation, often developed against odds, Rainbow's message is clear:

In pursuit of spontaneity a generation of schoolchildren had already grown up without skills previously regarded as essential in elementary education. Theories that children should not be pestered to learn to spell, write grammatically, or learn multiplication tables later found a musical counterpart in arguments against teaching the use of notation.

Rainbow's warnings made abundant sense but are only now being heeded.

In 1972, when the College of St Mark and St John moved to Plymouth, Rainbow transferred to Gypsy Hill College of Education and became Head of Music when it was incorporated into Kingston Polytechnic (now university). Here he launched the new CNAA degree of BA (MusEd). As a musicologist he contributed to many of the leading dictionaries and, following his MPhil and PhD from Leicester University, was particularly pleased with the award of their first DLitt in 1992. In 1994, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and an Honorary Fellow of Trinity College of Music in the following year.

In 1996 Rainbow issued another prescient warning against neglecting one of our greatest national musical assets. He became President of the Campaign for the Defence of the Traditional Cathedral Choir, an organisation formed to champion the ancient tradition

of the all-male choir in cathedrals and similar choral foundations by resisting the introduction of women and girls into such choirs. Also in 1996 he generously established the annual Bernarr Rainbow Award for School Music Teachers which is administered by the Music Education Department at Trinity College of Music. There is nothing like this award, which is being supported by the Bernarr Rainbow Trust, a registered charity, and is endowed to enable it to continue into the foreseeable future - a worthy memorial to its founder.

Bernarr Rainbow made a remarkable recovery from a stroke in 1991; his much-loved and supportive wife, Olive, died in 1996; and he fought his own debilitating illnesses with exemplary courage and characteristic good-humour.

Peter Dickinson

Bernarr Joseph George Rainbow, music educationist; born London 2 October 1914; married 1943 Olive Still (died 1996); died Esher, Surrey 17 March 1998.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Deaths, Marriages, Deaths, Memorials, Weddings, Anniversaries, in Memoriam) should be sent to writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-232 2002 (24-hour answering machine 0171-232 2001) or faxed to 0171-232 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, funerals, obituaries, marriages, divorces) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

THE OBITUARIES e-mail address is obituaries@independent.co.uk

Synagogue services

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow can be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 5.59pm.

United Synagogue: 0181-343 9999.

Federation of Synagogues: 0181-222 2243.

Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues: 0171-580 1643.

Synagogue of Great Britain: 0181-349 4721.

Spanish and Portuguese Jews Congregation: 0171-287 2573.

New London Synagogue (Masorti): 0171-328 1026.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen will visit Llandudno, Wales, on 21 March, with Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, and the Duchess of Cornwall, on 22 March. The Queen will visit Llandudno, Wales, on 21 March, with Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, and the Duchess of Cornwall, on 22 March. The Queen will visit Llandudno, Wales, on 21 March, with Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, and the Duchess of Cornwall, on 22 March.

Changing of the Guard The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment will march from Horse Guards to the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, London, on 21 March. The Queen's Life Guard will be mounted on 21 March.

Birthdays

Sir William Asscher, consultant physician, St George's Hospital, London, 67; The Very Rev William Buddle, former Rector, St James's Piccadilly, 84; Dr Wendy Baron, former Director, Government Art Collection, 61; Mr Anthony Blond, publisher, 71; Mr Timothy Brooks, Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire, 69; Sir Arnold Burgen, former Chairman, Anglia and Oxford Regional Health Authority, 69; The Right Rev Mario Conti, Roman Catholic Bishop of Aberdeen, 64; Mr Yvette Cooper MP, 48; Mr Ian J. Graham-Bryce, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Dundee University, 61; Mr William Hurt, actor, 48; Mr John Joubert, composer, 71; Mr Madan Lal, cricketer, 47; Miss Frances Lincoln, publisher, 53; Dame Vera Lynn, singer, 84; Mr Tony McWalter MP, 53; Mr Pierre Messmer, former French prime minister, 82; Sir David Montgomery, former chairman, the Forestry Commission, 67; Mr Brian Mulroney, former prime minister of Canada, 59; Mr Jeremy Nichols, Headmaster, Stowe School, 55; Dr John Rae, former Headmaster, Westminster School, 67; Lord Saville of Newdigate, a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, 62; Mr Jonathan Peel MP, 58; Mr Greg Searle, now Sayeed, 65; Sir Harry Solomon, director, 67; 26; Sir Richard Wallace's Pictures, 1pm.

Lectures

Victoria and Albert Museum: Clare Ford Willis, "Renaissance Decorative Painting", 2.30pm. Tate Gallery: Simon Morley, "The Promise of Happiness: the paintings of Pierre Bonnard", 1pm. Wallace Collection: Stephen Duffy, "Van Gogh and Sir Richard Wallace's Pictures", 1pm.

Dinners

HM Government: Lord Gilbert, Minister of State for Defence Procurement, was the host at a dinner held yesterday evening at Lancaster House, London SW1, in honour of Mr Massimo Bruti, Deputy Minister for Defence of the Italian Republic.

LAW REPORT: 20 MARCH 1998

Awareness of article's true nature is enough

Regina v Dunne, Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) (Lord Justice Hutton, Mr Justice France and Judge Goddard QC) 6 March 1998

AN ACCUSED would be guilty of importing an obscene article if he was aware of its true nature and the jury concluded that it was such as would tend to deprave and corrupt within the meaning of section 1(1) of the Obscene Publications Act 1959.

The Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal of William Gerard Dunne against his conviction at Harrow Crown Court on 17 September 1997, following a change of plea to guilty, of being knowingly concerned in the fraudulent evasion of a prohibition on the importation of goods imposed by section 42 of the Customs Consolidation Act 1876, contrary to section 170(2) of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979.

The appellant had arrived

at Heathrow Airport from Amsterdam, with videotapes, paper video covers and three brochures in his possession. He had told a customs officer that he had brought some videos back from Amsterdam and, in response to the question: "What sort of videos?" he had replied: "Blue movies."

The customs officer had formed the view that the videos and the covers were obscene, and the appellant was arrested, interviewed and charged.

Following a ruling on a point of law at his trial, the appellant had changed his plea to guilty. He appealed against conviction on the ground that the judge's ruling was incorrect.

Charles Salter (Registrar of Criminal Appeals) for the appellant; Craig Ferguson (Solicitor, Customs and Excise) for the Crown.

which he had been charged was one which it was impossible to commit.

The argument was as follows: it was an essential ingredient of the offence that the appellant had known at the time of importation that the articles were obscene, and the question whether an article was obscene within the meaning of section 42 of the 1876 Act depended on whether it fell within the definition of obscenity in section 1(1) of the Obscene Publications Act 1959, which provided that:

"an article shall be deemed to be obscene if its effect... is, if taken as a whole, such as to tend to deprave and corrupt persons who are likely, having regard to all the relevant circumstances, to read see or hear the matter contained or embodied in it."

Accordingly, until a jury had determined whether an article was within that definition, no one could know whether or not it was obscene; the person importing it, when stopped in customs and asked whether he

knew the article was obscene could do no more than express his opinion in terms of the degree of probability of its being found to be obscene.

Counsel for the appellant had conceded that a man who fraudulently imported a prohibited drug believing it to be such would be guilty of knowingly importing that drug even though his belief might be based only on what the person who had given it to him had told him, and he had not himself analysed the substance. He said, however, that belief was apt only to matters of fact, not matters of opinion.

While the philosopher might say that it was impossible to know anything, the adverb "knowingly" in the 1979 Act (and in many other statutes creating criminal offences) was to be understood as emphasising the requirement of *mens rea*. It was fallacious to contend that, whereas belief that a bag containing heroin did contain heroin was a belief as to fact,

belief that an article had a tendency to deprave and corrupt those likely to see it was a matter of opinion.

Whether an article had such a tendency was as much a question of fact as was the question whether the powder in the bag was heroin, and either might have to be determined by the jury in the event of dispute. A defendant who believed that the heroin he was carrying was glucose was entitled to be acquitted, just as was the defendant who believed that the obscene videos he was carrying were recordings of sporting events. A defendant who was aware of the true nature of the article he was importing would, however, be guilty if the jury concluded that article had the tendencies specified in section 1(1) of the 1959 Act. The offence was not incapable of commission, and the appellant had no grounds for maintaining that his conviction was unsafe.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

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Why our prisons are not working

"PRISON WORKS" must rank as one of the most fatuous slogans ever devised and, in terms of its persuasive power, one of the least effective. Michael Howard, the villain of this particular piece, adopted the air of an impatient head teacher explaining the laws of logic to a class of dim pupils when he pointed out that if criminals were in prison, they could not be committing crimes against people outside.

The slogan's crassness was all the more apparent because it was invented for the purpose of countering one of the cleverest and most persuasive slogans recently deployed in politics. Labour's claim to be "tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime".

Now, however, the superior slogan is being tested against the harsh world of reality. The prison population, which was around 45,000 throughout the Conservative years, with a slight bump upwards in the late Eighties, started to rise when Mr Howard became Home Secretary in 1993. It turned into a trend which cannot be easily or quickly reversed. Especially when we consider both how committed the Labour government is to the first part of its slogan, and the inevitably long timetable implied by the second part.

By the time of the election last year the prison population in Britain had shot past 60,000. Now there are 65,000 people in prison, with the figure expected to rise to between 83,000 and 93,000 in seven years' time.

This is the background against which to read yesterday's confirmation by the Board of Visitors at Wormwood Scrubs that brutality by prison staff against inmates is something which "goes on". Overcrowding is a serious problem which, combined with low morale among large parts of the Prison Service, is bound to create breakdowns of discipline of all kinds.

Jack Straw, who has inherited Mr Howard's trembling pressure-cooker, urgently needs to ask why Britain locks up a greater proportion of its population than any other European country except Portugal, and why that proportion is rising so fast. As Mr Howard might explain in pedantic tones to his dim class, recorded crime is no longer rising, so it is because criminals who appear in court are more likely to be locked up and to be locked up for longer than before. Partly, this is the result of more lock-'em-up legislation, and partly because the courts have responded to the climate of lock-'em-up rhetoric in which they work.

To Mr Straw's credit, he resisted the knee-jerk populism of the Tory "three strikes and you're out" proposals for burglary, imposing compulsory jail terms on third-time offenders. And he has also changed his line on electronic tagging. Home Office plans for 30,000 offenders a year to serve community sentences under curfews enforced by tags should be treated with scepticism – not least because the assumption behind tagging is that criminals behave rationally – but tagging could be a way of unwinding some of the hard-line rhetoric without appearing soft on crime.

However, many thousands too many people are still destined to end up behind bars before anything resembling action on the "causes of crime" will show through. Even if all the pledges of ending social exclusion, tackling truancy, ending the pressure on boys to behave badly, take us eventually to the promised land, in the meantime far too many will be brutalised, physically and emotionally, by a prison system which plainly is not working.

There are two groups of prisoners which should be Mr Straw's priorities. The first is the 8,000 remand prisoners, an eighth of the total, all of them innocent until proved guilty, many of them receiving a crash course in drug use or the habits of crime. Labour has promised to speed up the average 13-week delays for young offenders, but older offenders matter too, and at the very least speeding up youth cases should not be at the expense of the rest of the system.

Then there are the 8,000 black people, eight times over-represented in the prison population in relation to their numbers in the country as a whole. Five of the eight prisoners alleging brutality in the Scrubs are black. There is evidence that black criminals are more likely to receive custodial sentences than white ones, although most of the over-representation occurs before the courtroom is reached. Mr Straw said in a pre-election interview with this newspaper that one of the three legacies for which he wanted to be remembered was successfully tackling racism. The other two were incorporating the European Convention on Human Rights and "catching and dealing effectively with" more criminals. Well, we have heard plenty about those two. Let us hear more about being tough on racial inequality and tough on its causes.

Blair taken for a spin on the moral barbecue

TONY BLAIR'S failure to register the hospitality extended to him by Formula One bosses was a fairly trivial offence, to be sure, but it raises an important issue.

Sir Gordon Downey, the public servant paid to stand guard over MPs' morals, concludes that the Blair family day out among the Marlboro boardings had a "value" of more than £215, and so should have been declared. We are not wholly convinced, because the then leader of the Opposition did not come to see the motor racing, which is why other people pay money for the tickets.

What Sir Gordon did not say, because he appears not to have access to a newspaper cuttings library, is that Mr Blair's children were driven around the Silverstone track by Damon Hill. Now, that is a perk worth a bob or two, which the Prime Minister strangely omitted to mention in his defence.

Which brings us to the serious point. Be he ever so high and ever so convinced of his own moral purity, it is healthy that the Prime Minister be tested on the moral spit on which he so roasted the Tories when he was on their side of the fire.



MILES KINGSTON

VERY UNUSUAL JOBS INDEED
No 37 in a series: The woman who auditions voices for BBC Radio.

"IF YOU can't remember what a voice sounds like, that probably means I've chosen the right voice for the airwaves."

The speaker (and a very nice voice it is too) is Eleanora Grebe, whose job it is to make sure that the voice fits the role on BBC radio. Does that mean that some voices would be no good for some roles?

"Of course. A man who sounds good reading the news would sound awful interviewing Gordon Brown, and vice versa. Think of all the programmes like *PM* and *The World at One* and *Today*, where the newscasters are unburied, and measured, and calmly statesmanlike, with slightly deep voices. Then think of the presenters, who are all slightly urgent, as if they thought that what they were saying was burning to be said, and are dying to

get on with it. You could never have Brian Perkins interviewing anyone, as his questions would sound too complete to need an answer. By the same token you can't imagine John Humphrys reading the news. I don't think you'd really trust him. Oddly enough, people like Brian Perkins are also ideal when reading out very silly news cuttings on *The News Quiz*, as their measured, grave tones make the idiocy sound even more funny.

"Actually, the news is probably easier to read than the weather forecast, because the weather readers have to grasp your attention much more. If your attention wavers from the news, and you miss the item about Jonathan Aitken or relaxation on the beef ban, then there's no harm done, because it was going to be boring anyway. But if you miss the forecast for your corner of the UK, you've missed out something vital to your life. So the weather men have to be crystal clear."

Would she call Ian McAskill clear? Some

people can't make out a word he's saying. "It's very important to have regional accents on the weather," says Eleanora Grebe, avoiding the question, "and it's also important to have a weather forecaster that Rory Bremner can imitate. Without McAskill, who could he do on the weather front?"

There seems to be a preponderance of Scottish accents when it comes to the regions. Is this to satisfy the touchy Scots?

"Not really," says Eleanora Grebe. "In fact the Welsh are touchier than the Scots, and we should have more Welsh accents, but most of the men we employ who are proud of being Welsh, like John Humphrys, have unfortunately lost their Welsh accents. We have seriously considered trying to train him to get it back, but it's probably too late."

"One way in which we have contrived to placate the Scots is to place Scotland first in the weather forecast on Radio 4, so the Scots think they are getting preferential treatment."

Nicotine patches

MILLY JENKINS ("Nothing's a patch on will power", 10 March) implies that pharmacists sell nicotine replacement products (NRT) as though all a smoker has to do is use them and they will automatically quit smoking.

The vast majority of pharmacists and their staff are fully aware that NRT is merely a tool – though a very powerful tool – to help people giving up. No tool – including NRT, hypnosis, acupuncture or smoking cessation clinics – will succeed unless the person has passed the stage

First birds

YOUR science editor describes a turkey-sized creature with a long neck and a movable snout enabling it to open the mouth for large morsels of food ("Skull discovery shows that birds are descended from dinosaurs", 19 March). These, you claim, were "early birds". Whatever sort of worms did they catch?

PAMELA DONOHUE
Sheffield

Prisoner exchange

THERE IS a simple solution to the recent prison problems. Transfer all the inmates of Wormwood Scrubs to the Maze, and all the prisoners in the Maze to Wormwood Scrubs. Alternatively, leave the inmates where they are, and let the two prisons swap officers.

PETER REYNOLDS
Southport, Merseyside

Vatican whitewash

YOU WERE right to dismiss the Vatican statement on the Holocaust as "whitewash" (report, 17 March). Far from being an adequate "act of repentance" it is more of a tactical deflection of criticism of the Church as an institution by shifting the blame on to individuals.

In fact the opposite was often the case, with something of the credibility of the Church being salvaged by the exceptional heroism of individuals like Frans Jagerstatter in the face of overwhelming institutional indifference or hostility.

The Nazis drew widely upon the centuries-old prejudices which have been nurtured by the Church, such as the *Servitus Judaeorum* (the "perpetual servitude of the Jews" decreed by the 3rd Lateran Council) and the model of the religious crusading orders which the new "knights" of the SS were expected to emulate.

As with the previous denial of any responsibility by the Church for the genocide of American Indians during their enforced "Christianisation" or more recently the denial by the Church of responsibility for individual cases of clerical abuse, it is not only the act but the denial which is destructive. It induces a paralysis of confidence in the institution.

FR DOMINIC KIRKHAM
Manchester

Nothing to do with me

LEST SILENCE be taken as confirmation of the assertions in Tim Hulse's article "The subjects still object to Queen Camilla" (17 March), I should like to make it absolutely clear that I have not played "a major role" in influencing the discussions of the "Way Ahead group". I have had no involvement whatsoever in these deliberations; I know only as much about the work of the "Way Ahead group" as anyone else who follows coverage in your newspaper and others.

PETER MANDELSON
Minister without Portfolio
Cabinet Office
London SW1

And here is the news, read by a man with a calm, measured, statesmanlike voice

Australia (dollars)	2.4227	Italy (lira)	2.923
Austria (schillings)	20.77	Japan (yen)	214.09
Belgium (francs)	60.98	Malta (lira)	0.65390
Canada (\$)	2.3040	Netherlands (guilders)	3.3299
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8597	Norway (kroner)	12.38
Denmark (kroner)	11.34	Portugal (escudos)	299.63
Finland (markka)	9.0249	Spain (pesetas)	250.48
France (francs)	9.949	South Africa (rand)	7.9161
Germany (marks)	2.9669	Sweden (kroner)	12.93
Greece (drachmes)	39.48	Switzerland (francs)	2.4227
Hong Kong (\$)	12.52	Turkey (lira)	380.730
Ireland (puns)	1.1769	USA (\$)	1.6282

Source: Thomas Cook

Source: Thomas Cook
indication purposes only



OUTLOOK

ON WHY GM HAS STUCK WITH LUTON, THE THREAT OF INDEXATION, AND CRUICKSHANK'S PROPOSALS FOR A SUPER-REGULATOR

Blair drives a hard bargain with General Motors

In the absence of a carrot, Tony Blair decided to follow the advice of Roosevelt and speak softly but carry a big stick. General Motors' pledge last night to maintain operations at its Vauxhall plant in Luton, provided world-class standards of productivity are met, is a victory for the discreet diplomacy of the Prime Minister and Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade.

Luton is not in an area of the country that qualifies for regional selective assistance. Mr Blair therefore could not tempt Vauxhall to build the successor to the Vectra (the uninspiringly named Epsilon) at the plant with the promise of a fat government subsidy.

Instead he appears to have appealed to the company's better nature and persuaded it that what is good for Luton is good for GM too. It is only possible to speculate on what deals have been cut in smoke-filled rooms, what arm twisting went on behind closed doors. But the fact is that multi-national companies are always keen to present themselves as good citizens in whichever country they manufacture.

Governments can make life particularly unpleasant for car makers. It is a moot point whether Vauxhall would have been allowed to retain its designation as a British car maker - still an important consideration for many

fleet buyers - if it had closed Luton down, and watch its balance of trade slip even further into the red as it imported yet more cars.

However, all good agreements are ones that allow both sides to claim victory. To be assured of the Vectra replacement, Luton will have to close the 30 per cent cost gap with its Continental rivals at some speed. It is a tall order but the Japanese have shown it can be done. Mr Blair may turn out not to be the only one with a big stick.

Gartmore goes for indexation

The big active fund management groups have had a rough time of it lately. Try as they might, they keep on underperforming the index. Given that active fund management costs a good deal more than having someone track the index for you, this seems a pretty run deal. Many trustees have come to wonder why they are employing these people. Gartmore Investment Management, one of the big four, yesterday came up with a wizzard wheeze to help stop the rot - er, rather than you having to go to the bother of moving to an indexed fund, they'll index

your money for you. That way you can be guaranteed not to underperform.

To be fair, it's not quite as simple or silly as that. Gartmore plans to offer a mix of passive and active management within its core balanced fund product. A large slug of the money, in some cases the larger part of it, will be passively managed to satisfy accelerating demand from trustees for indexation. But the rest will be actively managed within "conviction" portfolios that target higher returns. According to Gartmore, this will help clients establish the right balance between risk and reward.

It hardly needs pointing out that the idea won't necessarily solve the problem. If Gartmore continues to underperform in active management, then the balanced fund will underperform as well, albeit not by as much. Furthermore, if this is what trustees really want, what's to stop them dividing up the money themselves between active and passive managers? Actually this is what larger pension funds do already. Unfortunately it's generally not cost effective for smaller funds. So Gartmore is probably correct in believing there could be demand for this kind of product. Certainly a number of leading actuaries have been talking recently about the need for precisely this kind of thing.

All the same, the initiative does rather seem indicative of a general dumbing down of fund management. If you can't beat 'em, join 'em, seems to be the attitude of a growing number of active fund managers. Never mind the reality of indexation. Fear of it is driving fund managers into the index in growing numbers too, feeding its upward march, and making it more difficult still for the active managers to keep up.

Dangers of overly vigilant regulation

Don Cruickshank seems determined to go out all guns blazing, doesn't he? This is his final month as Director General of Ofcom and for a regulator who's already said there won't be any need to control telecom prices soon after the turn of the century, he's certainly packing it in. First he dispatched the mobile phone companies to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Now he's suggesting that Ofcom is recreated as the Electronic Communications Commission, swallowing a large chunk of the Independent Television Commission's functions in the process.

There's obviously some logic in the proposal. The model is the Federal Communications Commission, which has long been responsible for economic regulation of both broadcasting and telecommunications in the US. As the lines between traditional broadcast TV, cable, new media and telecommunications become more and more blurred, the opportunity for and complexity of anti-competitive practice is bound to grow. The ITC, which was set up to regulate a limited number of publicly franchised TV monopolies, is plainly not appropriate to the task in the modern world and Mr Cruickshank is right to suggest its activities be confined to content and quality.

However, if it is logical to absorb large parts of the ITC into Ofcom, would it not also be equally logical to absorb Ofcom into the soon to be created Competition Authority. Mr Cruickshank's answer seems to be that electronic communications is too specialist a field, as well as too essential a utility, to be left to the wider competition authorities. He may be right, but there are dangers as well as advantages in having a busybody specialist regulator digging around in emerging industries and technologies. Overly vigilant regulation can sometimes be more harmful to advance than a dominant monopoly supplier.

US trade gap with troubled Asian economies balloons

THE US trade deficit with the troubled economies of South-east Asia ballooned in January, the Commerce Department said yesterday. The shortfall between American exports to and imports from Indonesia leapt by 121 per cent to \$538m (£326m), and the gap with South Korea by 151 per cent to \$856m. The news that the politically sensitive bilateral deficit with Japan actually shrank by 15 per cent to \$4.36bn could not distract attention from a record headline figure of \$12.04bn for the monthly deficit on trade in goods and services.

Analysts said the weaker trade position would eat into the US economy's growth in the first quarter of this year. Other figures yesterday suggested that growth remained fast enough to raise inflationary pressure. There was a surprise increase of 0.3 per cent in the "core" consumer price index, although lower oil prices held the headline increase to 0.1 per cent. Real earnings jumped by 0.9 per cent in February following a similar increase in January.

Irish Life on the lookout

IRISH LIFE, Ireland's largest insurer, which reported a rise of 21 per cent in 1997 operating profit yesterday, said it was seeking to broaden its penetration in the Irish market but could not rely on the right acquisitions coming on stream. "We want to broaden and deepen our options in the Irish financial services market," David Kingston, chief executive, said. "It would be nice to accelerate the process through a suitable acquisition but you cannot rely on that."

Hanson property sell-off

HANSON, the building materials and equipment group, has sold its surplus UK property interests to O&H Holdings, the privately owned property and construction group, for £25m. The sale of 300 freehold properties completes Hanson's £86m disposal of non-operational UK property interests, the company said in a statement.

Cobham cautious on planes

COBHAM, the aerospace components and defence group, yesterday warned aircraft manufacturers of the dangers of stepping up production rates to unrealistic levels in the light of the Asia crisis and said it was "monitoring events very closely" in the region. Cobham, which manufactures a range of component systems for civil aviation plane makers, said it had experienced some weakness in demand from the Asian markets, but that, so far, its main Airbus order book had remained unaffected by the current turmoil in the region. The group yesterday posted a 19.7 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £52.3m, in line with analysts' expectations. The total dividend is being raised to 13.25p from 11.3p.

Cattles keeps up growth

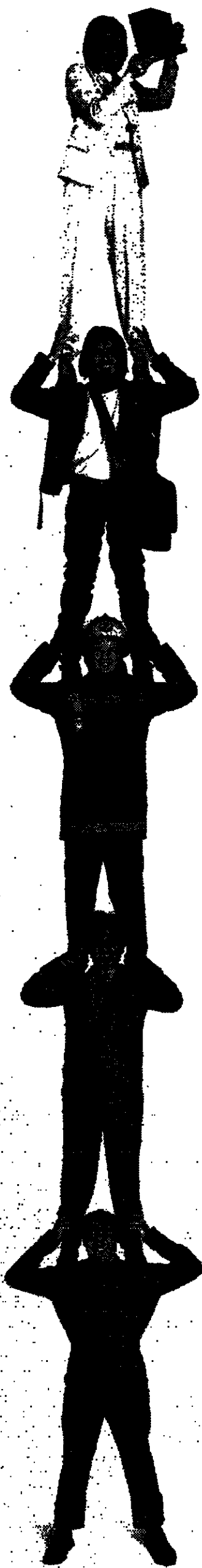
CATTLES, the financial services group, yesterday said it would maintain its growth record of 15-20 per cent for earnings and profits and hoped to increase this to 20-25 per cent growth in three to five years time. The group, which specialises in door-to-door collected credit but has been widening its services in recent years to other areas, reported a 17 per cent rise in pre-tax profits for 1997 to £39.6m, up from £33.9m the previous year. Eddie Cran, chief executive, said the group now had a record of 16 years of unbroken profit increases.

Toad buys car audio firm

TOAD, the car security firm, plans to buy a firm called Sextons for £10m payable in cash and shares. It intends to fund the purchase through a placing and open offer of 25.5 million shares at 25p per share to raise £5.6m. Sextons is a distributor and installer of car audio and cellular telephone equipment and car security systems.

COMPANY RESULTS				
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
AMEC (F)	2,771m (2,780m)	88.4m (27.2m)	16.5p (4.7p)	5.0p (4.0p)
Charles Stephens (F)	238.5m (218.4m)	24.2m (22.5m)	5.34p (6.38p)	3.2p (2.8p)
Harrogate (F)	206.5m (128.3m)	51.1m (28.5m)	44.3p (31.4p)	10.0p (7.4p)
Harford (F)	38.7m (32.9m)	24.7m (15.1m)	4.57p (3.2p)	2.3p
Capital Corp (F)	61.3m (43.5m)	12.97m (8.65m)	7.86p (5.44p)	5.13p (3.13p)
Colliers (F)	375.3m (333.2m)	35.11m (31.1m)	18.0p (13.0p)	5.35p (4.8p)
Crymlyn (F)	20.55m (17.44m)	7.86m (3.7m)	38.3p (32.0p)	13.3p (11.26p)
Cubitts (F)	222.8m (208.8m)	26.3m (23.7m)	26.4p (24.0p)	15.3p (13.8p)
Countdown Retailers (F)	911.5m (100.7m)	38.4m (8.4m)	48.9p (32.9p)	17.0p (16.5p)
Evans Halshaw (F)	- (F)	21.58m (1.32m)	16.3p (8.7p)	3.5p (2.3p)
Finnish Earth (F)	11.28m (8.17m)	1.41m (0.08m)	15.0p (14.1p)	3.2p (2.75p)
James Fisher (F)	62.25m (57.96m)	8.21m (8.23m)	24.8p (16.2p)	10.0p (8.4p)
Reed (F)	458.5m (401.5m)	24.4m (22.3m)	15.1p (17.2p)	6.0p (5.7p)
Rice (F)	203.1m (146.9m)	6.1m (2.94m)	7.8p (8.0p)	1.8p (1.8p)
Joyce Group (F)	106.5m (112.9m)	2.11m (2.44m)	4.5p (15.3p)	nil
Johnson (F)	18.7m (12.4m)	0.265m (0.45m)	22.3p (17.2p)	6.5p (5.5p)
Knit-Fit (F)	472.8m (426.9m)	55.1m (48.5m)	0.25p (48.5p)	nil
NUFS (F)	113.4m (117m)	1.38m (1.33m)	8.0p (8.25p)	1.8p
Recreational Group (F)	5.28m (5.11m)	151.4m (135.8m)	12.85p (11.01p)	2.1p (1.7p)
Win Whittaker (F)	2.28m (2.17m)	2.75m (2.09m)	4.83p (4.48p)	nil
Woolworths Corp (F)	0.906m (2.35m)	54.5m (50.1m)	46.4p (38.8p)	8.5p (8.1p)
Woolworths Europe (F)	1.135m (0.485m)	2.55m (1.85m)	4.78p (5.86p)	3.2p (3.3p)
Woolworths Financial (F)	48.58m (27.1m)	2.55m (1.74m)	12.4p (12.7p)	5.3p (5.1p)
Woolworths (F)	162.3m (153.5m)	3.70m (3.09m)	21.0p (18.1p)	11.5p (10.0p)
Woolworths (F)	49.7m (43.4m)	48.7m (38.3m)	33.8p (25.3p)	13.2p (11.8p)
Woolworths (F)	555.0m (518.1m)	64.1m (56.2m)	31.8p (28.3p)	4.35p (4.75p)
Woolworths (F)	324.3m (302.1m)	13.5m (13.05m)	8.81p (8.35p)	4.35p (4.75p)
Woolworths (F)	89.4m (88.2m)	-	-	-

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CBI THE TIMES

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Cazenove and Schroders rapped over AEA float

By Michael Harrison

CAZENOVE and Schroders were sharply criticised yesterday by the public spending watchdog, the National Audit Office, for their role in advising on the £238m sale of AEA Technology, which has more than doubled in value since privatisation 18 months ago.

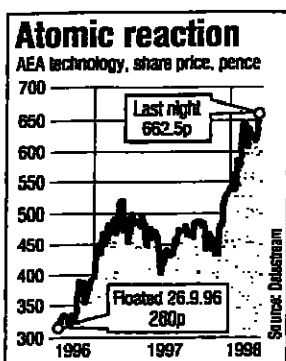
Shares in the company, the commercial arm of the UK Atomic Energy Authority, soared to a 15 per cent premium on their first day of trading in September, 1996.

Since then the shares have risen from an issue price of 280p to 622.5p, valuing AEA Technology at £566m.

The NAO criticised Cazenove, the Department of Trade and Industry's brokers, for failing to test demand for the shares at prices higher than 280p, pointing out that an increase of just 10p in the offer price would have raised the sale proceeds by £8m.

The NAO's report also reveals that three Cazenove companies were among the institutions to which it allocated a total of 68 million shares.

The DTI's failure to oversee the allocation of these shares was criticised by the NAO. However, it added that



there was no evidence that Cazenove had unduly favoured any institutions, including its own companies, in the allocation process.

Schroders, the department's financial adviser, was criticised over the £1.8m success fee it received following the sale. The size of the fee was linked to the extent that the sale proceeds exceeded Schroders' own estimate of the likely receipts.

However, there was no independent review of the methodology and assumptions made by Schroders.

The NAO also says that privatisation proceeds were even lower than the £228m achieved, since some of the £121m of restructuring charges incurred by the Government

before the flotation should reasonably be regarded as sale costs.

The chief executive of AEA technology is Dr Peter Watson, who was also the chairman of the train leasing company Porterbrook and made a £3m profit on his shares when the company was bought by Stagecoach. That sale was savagely criticised by the NAO in a report last week.

Total costs of advisers on the AEA flotation came to £8.134m. In addition to its success fee, Schroders received a basic fee of £560,000 while Cazenove received £2.32m.

In its recommendations, the NAO said that in future the Government should consider the case for phasing sales - the flotation of AEA Technology involved 100 per cent of the shares.

It also said that when relying on prior soundings taken in the market, the process should be conducted rigorously so as to give a good indication of the likely demand at different prices.

Although Cazenove increased the price range from 240-270p to 250-280p, there had to be significant scaling back of allocations after the issue was heavily oversubscribed.

Swallowfield chairman in a lather about factory improvements



A MAKEOVER of its production facilities will help Swallowfield increase capacity for its cosmetic and skin care products, the toiletries company said yesterday as it unveiled a 5 per cent rise in annual profits. The company made a pre-tax profit of £3.7 million in 1997, compared with £3.5m in the previous year. The dividend will be raised 10 per cent to 8p a share. Bill O'Leary, Swallowfield chairman

(pictured above getting a shave), said the company was well advanced on factory improvements. "We are optimistic that in 1998 we will maintain the organic growth in both turnover and profits reported over the last five years and our management team continues to use its knowledge and experience to maintain our core skills and expertise," he said.

Photograph: Daniel Newman

Telewest set to name digital partners

TELEWEST Communications, Britain's second largest cable group, said yesterday it expected to name its chosen partners to offer digital services in April.

"It is likely to be one company as far as end-to-end hardware is concerned but different companies in terms of operating systems and ... conditional access," Stephen Davidson, the chief executive, said.

His comments came as the group said its annual pre-tax losses had widened to £309.9m from £250.0m but added that 1997 was a turning point.

Telewest said it believed pre-tax losses had peaked and that it was embarking on a steady path towards profit. Mr Davidson said he agreed with some analyst forecasts that the company had seen the heaviest of its losses.

He added that analyst projections that the group would break-even around 2002 were "ones we would agree with". "It has been a year of enormous achievement. We generally see 1997 as a turning point. Strategic steps we said we would put in place we have put in place ... and 1998 has got off to a cracking start," he said.

Telewest, which saw earnings before interest, depreciation, tax and amortisation rise to £49.6m from £0.5m, declined to divulge the penetration targets it would have to meet to hit market projections. And the company, which reported key operating statistics in January, also declined to shed light on how merger talks were going.

With no statement announcing that negotiations are off, Telewest remains officially in bid talks with the Nasdaq-listed cable group NTL. It has also been on the receiving end of interest from one of its main shareholders - US West Communications Group - which has said it is considering raising its 26.53 per cent stake.

Reuter

National Express makes £20m profit on five rail franchises

By Michael Harrison

NATIONAL Express, the country's biggest train operator, made profits from every one of its five passenger rail franchises last year after receiving £500m in subsidies from the Government.

The transport group said yesterday that all its train operations beat their financial targets, achieving operating profits before restructuring charges of just under £20m. National Ex-

press will receive a total of £2.8bn in subsidies over the life of the five franchises - Gatwick Express, ScotRail, Midland Main Line, Central Trains and Silverline, formerly known as North London Railways.

The company also pointed out it was spending £240m on new rolling stock, and in the case of ScotRail and Central Trains investment levels were above those set out in its franchise agreements.

The improved financial performance came on the back of a 6-9 per cent rise in passenger numbers and increased levels of reliability and punctuality.

Phil White, chief executive of National Express, said standards of service had outperformed pre-privatisation levels and, in some cases, also the requirements laid down in its franchise agreements.

National Express, a founder shareholder in London & Con-

tinental Railways, confirmed that it had submitted an "indicative bid" in partnership with British Airways to take over the Eurostar train service.

The group expects John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister, to grant a further 30-day extension to LCR to assemble refinancing plans for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link when its current extension runs out at the end of this month.

National Express and BA are examining two options. One is to take over the Eurostar service between London, Paris and Brussels on a franchise basis, which would entail the Government providing subsidies in the early years to cover operating losses. Eurostar losses are currently running at £180m a year.

The other option would be for the Government to contract out the operation of the service, in which case the two companies would be paid a management fee. Colin Child, National Express finance director, said he did not believe it would be tainted by its involvement with LCR, which pulled out of its agreement to build the rail link in February after being refused a further £1.2m in subsidies.

He also said the two companies would address any competition problems that might arise because of BA's already dominant position in the air market

between London, Paris and Brussels.

The group's results for 1997 were hit by a £10.8m provision against its investment in LCR. This helped lower pre-tax profits from £60.1m in 1996 to £54.8m.

There were a further £17.5m of charges to cover restructuring costs, mainly in its rail franchises where staffing levels fell by 700. A further 350 jobs will be shed in the rail division this year.

Bulmer may sue Matthew Clark over new-look cider

By Andrew Yates

BRITAIN'S two biggest cider makers could become embroiled in a legal battle over best-selling brands. HP Bulmer, the market leader, is considering suing Matthew Clark over its arch-rival's new look Dry Blackthorn brand. It is concerned that Dry Blackthorn now bears close resemblance to Strongbow, its own best-selling cider.

Matthew Clark is relaunching Blackthorn this week, backed by a £7m advertising campaign. The new bottles and cans of cider have a motif in the shape of a gold arrow on a black background. Bulmer already uses an arrow symbol on a black background on its Strongbow pack-

aging. Strongbow, like Blackthorn, is the subject of a high-profile marketing drive which will see the two companies come head to head with each in the battle for a bigger slice of the troubled cider market.

A spokeswoman for Bulmer's said yesterday: "No legal action is being taken at the moment and we are in discussions with Matthew Clark. However the group did not rule out taking legal action in the future."

Matthew Clark denied the two parties were holding detailed discussions. "We remain totally confident in its [Dry Blackthorn's] integrity," said a spokesman for the group. "Of course we will respond vigorously if claims of this kind are



Clash of symbols: Rival cider brands both use an arrow

made. One phone call was made by Matthew Clark to Bulmer this morning [Thursday] but they did not commit themselves and said they would look at the situation."

Strongbow and Dry Black-

thorn are the most popular cider brands in the UK and their future success is vital to the financial fortunes of both groups. Competition in the cider market has intensified in recent years following a sharp fall in sales.

THE OVERSEAS INVESTMENT TRUST PLC

(INCORPORATED IN ENGLAND AND WALES WITH REGISTERED NO. 544419)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the register of members of the Company will be closed from the close of business on Friday, 27 March 1998 to Monday, 30 March 1998 (inclusive).

NOTICE IS ALSO HEREBY GIVEN that the register of holders of warrants of the Company will be closed from the close of business on Friday, 27 March 1998 and will not re-open if the proposals contained in the circular to shareholders and warrant-holders dated 6 March 1998 are approved by shareholders and warrant-holders.

Registered office: 21 Finsbury Circus, London EC2M 1NB
By Order of the Board
P A Hogwood, Secretary
Dated: 20 March 1998

GUS ready to resist US legal challenge to Metromail bid

By Nigel Cope
Cry Correspondent

GREAT UNIVERSAL Stores yesterday pledged to fight the lawsuit filed against it by a US company which is seeking to break up GUS's £500m bid for Metromail, an American database group.

GUS, which is already embroiled in a £1.6bn hostile bid for Argos, said it noted the action initiated on Wednesday by American Business Information and said: "GUS intends to vigorously assert its rights and will make a further statement when and if appropriate."

American Business Information, based in Omaha, has made a counter bid of £515m and launched legal action claiming that GUS had knowingly aided and abetted alleged breaches of conduct by Metromail's management.

Analysts said the legal ac-

tion and the prospect of a bid auction could prove distracting for GUS's management as the Argos battle heated up. But they said the company could still pull off both deals. "Fighting on two fronts isn't ideal but it is a limited distraction," said Nick Bubb of SG Securities. "It might make people think that GUS has got other things to do with its money and so might not raise its bid for Argos. But most people recognise that it could do both."

The court case is due to be held next Friday. The claim alleges that Metromail directors failed to hold a fair auction for the company and so breached their fiduciary duty to shareholders. American Business says it had stated its intention to Metromail to offer more than \$32 per share for the business, subject to due diligence. It was completing that process when Metromail announced

an agreed deal with GUS at \$31.50.

Analysts said GUS could increase its offer to \$35 per share and still not be accused of overpaying. However, some said Lord Wolfson, the GUS chairman, was likely to walk away rather than get involved in an auction. He has already admitted that paying £500m for a company that made a loss last year, was a "full price."

The collapse of the deal would be a significant blow to GUS which had seen the business as a key part of its expanding database and information empire in America. It had wanted to put Metromail together with Direct Technology, a business it acquired last year and whose main office is only 10 miles from Metromail's base.

GUS shares fell 2p to 780p on the news. Argos shares rose a penny to 605p against GUS's offer price of 570p.

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

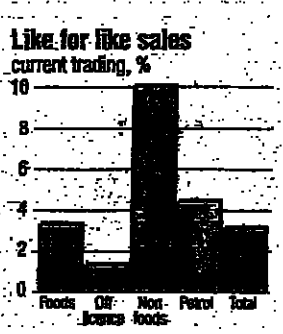
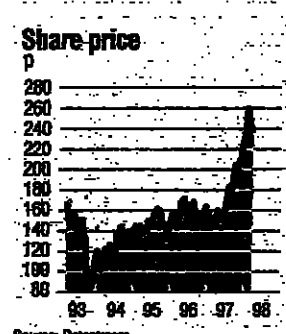
EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Morrison is back on track

William Morrison Supermarkets: At a glance

Market value: £1.9bn, share price 256.5p (+16.5p)

Five-year record	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£m)	1.5	1.8	2.1	2.2	2.3
Pre-tax profits (£m)	97.8	116.1	127.1	135.8	151.4
Earnings per share (p)	8.6	9.9	10.7	11.0	12.5
Dividends per share (p)	1.0	1.2	1.4	1.7	2.1



FOR A business that is a perennial takeover favourite, Wm Morrison is actually doing rather well. After a fallow period a couple of years ago when growth seemed to have stalled, the business has re-started its store opening programme, invested in refurbishments and spent money in distribution and other areas like a new packaging centre.

The results have been impressive as yesterday's 11.5 per cent increase in full-year profits to £151.4m confirms. The company has now increased sales and profits for 30 consecutive years and this is all the more impressive as it is one of the so-called second-tier supermarkets that one might suspect is under increased pressure from the major players.

With that pressure increasing due to consolidation in the sector, many have expected the Bradford-based Morrison to succumb to an approach from one of the leading supermarket chains such as Sainsbury's which has not got a strong presence in the north.

But with the Morrison family owning 40 per cent of the shares any deal would need to be friendly and chairman Ken Morrison seems in no mood to sell.

Looking at the company's record, it is not hard to see why. The shares rose 16.5p to a new high of 256.5p yesterday compared to a 149.5p a year ago.

Like Asda, it prides itself on keeping things simple. It has no loyalty card and concentrates on keeping prices low.

north where it is successfully battling against Asda. Like-for-like sales were up by 3.1 per cent in the first six weeks of the year.

This is hardly startling but the group is also hoping to improve the gross margin through improvements to the distribution network.

On NatWest Securities' forecast of £165m the shares trade on a forward p/e of 19. That seems too high to chase for now. Hold.

St James Place reaps rewards

SIR MARK Weinberg did not do any favours for private investors when a committee he chaired effectively barred them from getting involved in the majority of new issues. But it is a different story at St James Place Capital, his upmarket life insurance group, which has rewarded shareholders, both large and small, handsomely over the last few years.

St James Place Capital is essentially a holding company for J Rothschild Assurance

Group. The group has a two pronged strategy. First, it hires experienced sales people to pitch to rich clients. Total new business rose by 26 per cent to £109.3m in 1997, well ahead of the competition.

Second, JRA holds a 23 per cent stake in the "culture fund" life insurer, LAHC. The company takes advantage of consolidation in the life sector by buying ailing life insurers, closing them to new business and stripping out costs. In February, LAHC bought GAN (UK), a business with £2.8bn under management, which should add substantially to this year's earnings.

Positive results saw the shares jump by 22 per cent to 283.5p. However it is not just strong trading that has prompted the strong share price performance. Prudential, which has boosted its stake to nearly 30 per cent, is seen as a likely suitor.

However, a bid is far from certain. Sir Mark believes a takeover could damage JRA's business, where sales people are productive precisely because they are independent.

St James Place reported profits of £51.8m, or earnings per share of 8.6p. Stripping out the earnings from LAHC,

Kleinwort Benson forecasts earnings next year of 11.2p, putting the group on a forward multiple of over 25, against around 20 for the sector. Now would be a good time to take some profits.

Kwik-Fit finds new markets

KWIK-FIT's pledge to give "100 per cent customer delight" has also been applied to its shareholders. Under the astute leadership of Tom Farmer, the group's irreplaceable chairman and chief executive, its shares have outperformed the market by more than 85 per cent over the last five years.

There was never any doubt that Kwik-Fit was a master of fitting new tyres or fixing dodgy exhausts. There was a nagging worry, however, that it would struggle to continue to grow so rapidly as its chain of centres reached saturation point in the UK.

But Kwik-Fit has shown it can use its brand name to tap into new markets. Its motor insurance has taken off in a big way. The group has been able to use its captive customers to peddle new policies and sales are expanding apace. That could just be the beginning. Kwik-Fit believes it can eventually supply any service related to motoring. And expansion into Continental Europe is continuing apace.

The shares leapt 79p to 511p yesterday as the group announced that pre-tax profits motored ahead 27 per cent to £55m in 1997, smashing City forecasts. Analysts have upgraded current year profits to around £63m, putting the shares on prospective p/e ratio of more than 20. After such a sharp rise Kwik-Fit shares are not cheap and insurance profits are still unpredictable. However the shares are a solid long term hold.

صلى الله عليه وسلم

Telecoms frenzy boosts BT as Footsie nudges 6,000

MARKET REPORT



PETER THAL LARSEN

WHEN will the phone finally ring in the telecoms sector? Britain's telecom stocks have been stuck in a phoney war ever since British Telecom's proposed marriage with MCI fell apart last autumn after the US long-distance operator decided to jump into bed with rival WorldCom.

Since then, rumours involving every conceivable combination of operators have regularly done the rounds in the City. With spring well and truly sprung, not one of the many mooted offers has actually emerged.

Still, it seems that investors are still all too happy to listen to a good telecoms story. BT itself was at the centre of the frenzy yesterday as finance director Robert Brace told a US conference that the company was "talking to a number of major players" in the US

Although experienced BT watchers were hardly surprised, a number of investors felt the news was evidence that the

company was about to unveil a major transatlantic connection, and the shares put on 47.5p to hit a new peak of 685p on hefty volume of 17 million

Although it's no secret that BT is courting a number of US partners, a major constraint is the \$7bn (\$4.2bn) cash lumpsum that MCI still has to pay BT as compensation for pulling out of their merger. MCI would dearly love to avoid shelling out, and if BT found another partner its lawyers might have grounds to argue that the payment wasn't necessary.

That argument wasn't enough to scare off the bulls, though, who counter that although BT might not be able to sign a deal there is nothing to stop it from announcing an engagement.

BT's possible partners include AT&T and GTE, which were both being named yesterday in connection with mobile network operators Orange and Vodafone. Both

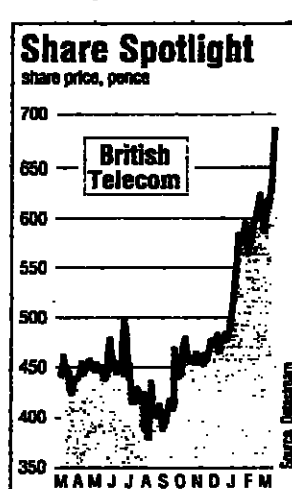
US groups have recently renewed their search for deals in Europe, and a British mobile phone company would fit well in either portfolio. Orange was up 17p to 428p while Vodafone added 35.5p to 617p.

The excitement even extended to Racal, up 23p to 326.5p, with whispers suggesting a bidder may pre-empt the flotation of its telecoms arm by snapping up the whole of Sir Ernest Harrison's electronics company.

The frenzy came on a day when the FTSE 100 came within a whisker of breaching the 6,000 barrier for the first time. It eventually closed up 94.3 points at 5997.9. Traders pointed to general post-budget optimism and a strong opening from Wall Street for the rise, as well as tomorrow's expiry of the March FTSE futures contract. The suggestion was that the arbitrageurs might try to score a big profit by pushing the FTSE as high as 6050 tomorrow.

Although these are short-term factors, it seems that the Labour government can do no wrong with the stock market. A cool £17bn was added to the value of shares yesterday, and the market has gained a whopping £300bn since Tony Blair was elected less than a year ago.

Energy Group, stuck in a



two-way bid tussle between rival US utility groups Texas and PacifiCorp, was the market's most active stock with over 18 million shares traded. US institutions are believed to be building up stakes in order to take up Energy Group's all-share offer, which is currently worth 865p compared to the 840p cash bid. The shares edged up 0.5p to 840p.

Media stocks also continued their recent rise, with Carlton adding 16.75p to 488.75p and BSkyB up a further 10.5p to 455p. Lord Hollick's United News & Media even managed to shrug off the sale of 60,000 shares by outgoing managing director David Arculus. The shares closed at a record 815p, up 15p.

Hopes that a white knight will come riding to the rescue of Bluebird Toys faded after Sir Ron Brierley's Guinness Peat Group, which has mounted a hostile bid for the Polly Pocket to Plasticine company, slammed Bluebird's prospects.

The shares slipped 5.5p to 106p. GPG's offer stands at 101p.

A strong set of annual results boosted Bodycote, the metal processing specialist. Its shares ended the day up 110p at a record high of 1157.5p. Good figures also helped Cobham, the engineering group, up 47p to 978.5p while exhaust and tyre firm Kwik-Fit accelerated 79p to 511p.

Manchester United, once the City's favourite football share, continued its fall from grace after Wednesday's exit from the European Champions League. With Arsenal challenging strongly in the Premiership, fans and shareholders alike are concerned that United could finish the season without any silverware. The shares were booted down 3p to 143p.

Rivals Newcastle United, however, shrugged off a 2-1 defeat by bottom of the league Crystal Palace to put on 3.5p to 47p.

TAKING STOCK

SEKOVOMEX, making industrial instruments, continued its recovery after recent results turned out less than expected. The shares, up 20p to 322.5p yesterday, touched a new low of 244p just a few weeks ago. House broker Charleshouse Tilney has reshuffled the shareholder base and is planning to issue a buy note today forecasting profits of £3.8m for the current year and £4.7m in 1999, which puts the shares on a forward p/e ratio of ten. The broker points out that recent deals have occurred at much higher valuations.

OVER on ADM, tiny fund manager Farlake added 10p to 265p. The shares hit a peak of 475p in 1996 before crashing to a low of 140p earlier this year. Schweco Nominees, whose beneficial owner is Derwent, thought to be linked to property entrepreneur David Rowland, has added 100,000 shares to its holding, giving it a 19.16 per cent stake.

Alcoholic Beverages									
Symbol	Price	Chg	Vol	PE	Div	Yield	52 Week	52 Week	52 Week
ABV	24.10	-0.10	1,415	18.00	0.00	0.00	24.10	24.10	24.10
BEV	24.10	-0.10	1,415	18.00	0.00	0.00	24.10	24.10	24.10
...
Banks, Financial									
BSX	24.10	-0.10	1,415	18.00	0.00	0.00	24.10	24.10	24.10
...
Barrels, Retail									
...
Beverages, Food & Soft									
...
Chemicals									
...
Construction									
...
Diversified Industrials									
...
Electricity									
...
Electronics									
...
Engineering									
...
Food Products									
...
Gas Distribution									
...
Health Care									
...
Household Goods									
...
Insurance									
...
Investment Trusts									
...
Leisure & Hotels									
...
Media									
...
Pharmaceuticals									
...
Real Estate									
...
Retail									
...
Services									
...
Telecommunications									
...
Transportation									
...
Utilities									

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where noted. The yield is the latest twelve month declared gross dividend as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by the latest twelve month earnings per share, based on continuing operations.

Other dealers & regions: a, London; b, Frankfurt; c, Zurich; d, Amsterdam; e, Paris; f, Madrid; g, Rome; h, Milan; i, Athens; j, Tel Aviv; k, Hong Kong; l, Singapore; m, Tokyo; n, Osaka; o, Seoul; p, Taipei; q, Manila; r, Bangkok; s, Jakarta; t, Kuala Lumpur; u, Singapore; v, Hong Kong; w, Taipei; x, Manila; y, Bangkok; z, Jakarta; aa, Kuala Lumpur; ab, Singapore; ac, Hong Kong; ad, Taipei; ae, Manila; af, Bangkok; ag, Jakarta; ah, Kuala Lumpur; ai, Singapore; aj, Hong Kong; ak, Taipei; al, Manila; am, Bangkok; an, Jakarta; ao, Kuala Lumpur; ap, Singapore;aq, Hong Kong; ar, Taipei; as, Manila; at, Bangkok; au, Jakarta; av, Kuala Lumpur; aw, Singapore; ax, Hong Kong; ay, Taipei; az, Manila; ba, Bangkok; bb, Jakarta; bc, Kuala Lumpur; bd, Singapore; be, Hong Kong; bf, Taipei; bg, Manila; bh, Bangkok; bi, Jakarta; bj, Kuala Lumpur; bk, Singapore; bl, Hong Kong; bm, Taipei; bn, Manila; bo, Bangkok; bp, Jakarta; bq, Kuala Lumpur; br, Singapore; bs, Hong Kong; bt, Taipei; bu, Manila; bv, Bangkok; bw, Jakarta; bx, Kuala Lumpur; by, Singapore; bz, Hong Kong; ca, Taipei; cb, Manila; cc, Bangkok; cd, Jakarta; ce, Kuala Lumpur; cf, Singapore; cg, Hong Kong; ch, Taipei; ci, Manila; cj, Bangkok; ck, Jakarta; cl, Kuala Lumpur; cm, Singapore; cn, Hong Kong; co, Taipei; cp, Manila; cq, Bangkok; cr, Jakarta; cs, Kuala Lumpur; ct, Singapore; cu, Hong Kong; cv, Taipei; cw, Manila; cx, Bangkok; cy, Jakarta; cz, Kuala Lumpur; da, Singapore; db, Hong Kong; dc, Taipei; dd, Manila; de, Bangkok; df, Jakarta; dg, Kuala Lumpur; dh, Singapore; di, Hong Kong; dj, Taipei; dk, Manila; dl, Bangkok; dm, Jakarta; dn, Kuala Lumpur; do, Singapore; dp, Hong Kong; dq, Taipei; dr, Manila; ds, Bangkok; dt, Jakarta; du, Kuala Lumpur; dv, Singapore; dw, Hong Kong; dx, Taipei; dy, Manila; dz, Bangkok; ea, Jakarta; eb, Kuala Lumpur; ec, Singapore; ed, Hong Kong; ee, Taipei; ef, Manila; ef, Bangkok; eg, Jakarta; eh, Kuala Lumpur; ei, Singapore; ej, Hong Kong; ek, Taipei; el, Manila; em, Bangkok; en, Jakarta; eo, Kuala Lumpur; ep, Singapore; eq, Hong Kong; er, Taipei; es, Manila; et, Bangkok; eu, Jakarta; ev, Kuala Lumpur; ew, Singapore; ex, Hong Kong; ey, Taipei; ez, Manila; fa, Bangkok; fb, Jakarta; fc, Kuala Lumpur; fd, Singapore; fe, Hong Kong; ff, Taipei; fg, Manila; fh, Bangkok; fi, Jakarta; fj, Kuala Lumpur; fk, Singapore; fl, Hong Kong; fm, Taipei; fn, Manila; fo, Bangkok; fp, Jakarta; fq, Kuala Lumpur; fr, Singapore; fs, Hong Kong; ft, Taipei; fu, Manila; fv, Bangkok; fw, Jakarta; fx, Kuala Lumpur; fy, Singapore; fz, Hong Kong; ga, Taipei; gb, Manila; gc, Bangkok; gd, Jakarta; ge, Kuala Lumpur; gf, Singapore; gg, Hong Kong; gh, Taipei; gi, Manila; gj, Bangkok; gk, Jakarta; gl, Kuala Lumpur; gm, Singapore; gn, Hong Kong; go, Taipei; gp, Manila; gq, Bangkok; gr, Jakarta; gs, Kuala Lumpur; gt, Singapore; gu, Hong Kong; gv, Taipei; gw, Manila; gx, Bangkok; gy, Jakarta; gz, Kuala Lumpur; ha, Singapore; hb, Hong Kong; hc, Taipei; hd, Manila; he, Bangkok; hf, Jakarta; hg, Kuala Lumpur; hh, Singapore; hi, Hong Kong; hj, Taipei; hk, Manila; hl, Bangkok; hm, Jakarta; hn, Kuala Lumpur; ho, Singapore; hp, Hong Kong; hq, Taipei; hr, Manila; hs, Bangkok; ht, Jakarta; hu, Kuala Lumpur; hv, Singapore; hw, Hong Kong; hx, Taipei; hy, Manila; hz, Bangkok; ia, Jakarta; ib, Kuala Lumpur; ic, Singapore; id, Hong Kong; ie, Taipei; if, Manila; ig, Bangkok; ih, Jakarta; ii, Kuala Lumpur; ij, Singapore; ik, Hong Kong; il, Taipei; im, Manila; in, Bangkok; io, Jakarta; ip, Kuala Lumpur; iq, Singapore; ir, Hong Kong; is, Taipei; it, Manila; iu, Bangkok; iv, Jakarta; iw, Kuala Lumpur; ix, Singapore; iy, Hong Kong; iz, Taipei; ja, Manila; jb, Bangkok; jc, Jakarta; jd, Kuala Lumpur; je, Singapore; jf, Hong Kong; jg, Taipei; jh, Manila; ji, Bangkok; jj, Jakarta; jk, Kuala Lumpur; jl, Singapore; jm, Hong Kong; jn, Taipei; jo, Manila; jp, Bangkok; jq, Jakarta; jr, Kuala Lumpur; js, Singapore; jt, Hong Kong; ju, Taipei; jv, Manila; jw, Bangkok; jx, Jakarta; jy, Kuala Lumpur; jz, Singapore; ka, Hong Kong; kb, Taipei; kc, Manila; kd, Bangkok; ke, Jakarta; kf, Kuala Lumpur; kg, Singapore; kh, Hong Kong; ki, Taipei; kj, Manila; kk, Bangkok; kl, Jakarta; km, Kuala Lumpur; kn, Singapore; ko, Hong Kong; kp, Taipei; kq, Manila; kr, Bangkok; ks, Jakarta; kt, Kuala Lumpur; ku, Singapore; kv, Hong Kong; kw, Taipei; kx, Manila; ky, Bangkok; kz, Jakarta; la, Kuala Lumpur; lb, Singapore; lc, Hong Kong; ld, Taipei; le, Manila; lf, Bangkok; lg, Jakarta; lh, Kuala Lumpur; li, Singapore; lj, Hong Kong; lk, Taipei; ll, Manila; lm, Bangkok; ln, Jakarta; lo, Kuala Lumpur; lp, Singapore; lq, Hong Kong; lr, Taipei; ls, Manila; lt, Bangkok; lu, Jakarta; lv, Kuala Lumpur; lv, Singapore; lw, Hong Kong; lx, Taipei; ly, Manila; lz, Bangkok; ma, Jakarta; mb, Kuala Lumpur; mc, Singapore; md, Hong Kong; me, Taipei; mf, Manila; mg, Bangkok; mh, Jakarta; mi, Kuala Lumpur; mj, Singapore; mk, Hong Kong; ml, Taipei; mn, Manila; mo, Bangkok; mp, Jakarta; mq, Kuala Lumpur; mr, Singapore; ms, Hong Kong; mt, Taipei; mu, Manila; mv, Bangkok; mw, Jakarta; mx, Kuala Lumpur; my, Singapore; mz, Hong Kong; na, Taipei; nb, Manila; nc, Bangkok; nd, Jakarta; ne, Kuala Lumpur; nf, Singapore; ng, Hong Kong; nh, Taipei; ni, Manila; nj, Bangkok; nk, Jakarta; nl, Kuala Lumpur; nm, Singapore; no, Hong Kong; np, Taipei; nt, Manila; nu, Bangkok; nv, Jakarta; nw, Kuala Lumpur; nx, Singapore; ny, Hong Kong; nz, Taipei; oa, Manila; ob, Bangkok; oc, Jakarta; od, Kuala Lumpur; oe, Singapore; of, Hong Kong; og, Taipei; oh, Manila; oi, Bangkok; oj, Jakarta; ok, Kuala Lumpur; ol, Singapore; om, Hong Kong; on, Taipei; oo, Manila; op, Bangkok; oq, Jakarta; or, Kuala Lumpur; os, Singapore; ot, Hong Kong; ou, Taipei; ov, Manila; ow, Bangkok; ox, Jakarta; oy, Kuala Lumpur; oz, Singapore; pa, Hong Kong; pb, Taipei; pc, Manila; pd, Bangkok; pe, Jakarta; pf, Kuala Lumpur; pg, Singapore; ph, Hong Kong; pi, Taipei; pj, Manila; pk, Bangkok; pl, Jakarta; pm, Kuala Lumpur; pn, Singapore; po, Hong Kong; pp, Taipei; pq, Manila; pr, Bangkok; ps, Jakarta; pt, Kuala Lumpur; pu, Singapore; pv, Hong Kong; pw, Taipei; px, Manila; py, Bangkok; pz, Jakarta; qa, Kuala Lumpur; qb, Singapore; qc, Hong Kong; qd, Taipei; qe, Manila; qf, Bangkok; qg, Jakarta; qh, Kuala Lumpur; qi, Singapore; qj, Hong Kong; qk, Taipei; ql, Manila; qm, Bangkok; qn, Jakarta; qo, Kuala Lumpur; qp, Singapore; qr, Hong Kong; qs, Taipei; qt, Manila; qu, Bangkok; qv, Jakarta; qw, Kuala Lumpur; qx, Singapore; qy, Hong Kong; qz, Taipei; ra, Manila; rb, Bangkok; rc, Jakarta; rd, Kuala Lumpur; re, Singapore; rf, Hong Kong; rg, Taipei; rh, Manila; ri, Bangkok; rj, Jakarta; rk, Kuala Lumpur; rl, Singapore; rm, Hong Kong; rn, Taipei; ro, Manila; rp, Bangkok; rq, Jakarta; rr, Kuala Lumpur; rs, Singapore; rt, Hong Kong; ru, Taipei; rv, Manila; rw, Bangkok; rx, Jakarta; ry, Kuala Lumpur; rz, Singapore; sa, Hong Kong; sb, Taipei; sc, Manila; sd, Bangkok; se, Jakarta; sf, Kuala Lumpur; sg, Singapore; sh, Hong Kong; si, Taipei; sj, Manila; sk, Bangkok; sl, Jakarta; sm, Kuala Lumpur; sn, Singapore; so, Hong Kong; sp, Taipei; sq, Manila; sr, Bangkok; st, Jakarta; su, Kuala Lumpur; sv, Singapore; sw, Hong Kong; sx, Taipei; sy, Manila; sz, Bangkok; ta, Jakarta; tb, Kuala Lumpur; tc, Singapore; td, Hong Kong; te, Taipei; tf, Manila; tg, Bangkok; th, Jakarta; ti, Kuala Lumpur; tj, Singapore; tk, Hong Kong; tl, Taipei; tm, Manila; tn, Bangkok; to, Jakarta; tp, Kuala Lumpur; tq, Singapore; tr, Hong Kong; ts, Taipei; tt, Manila; tu, Bangkok; tv, Jakarta; tw, Kuala Lumpur; tx, Singapore; ty, Hong Kong; tz, Taipei; ua, Manila; ub, Bangkok; uc, Jakarta; ud, Kuala Lumpur; ue, Singapore; uf, Hong Kong; ug, Taipei; uh, Manila; ui, Bangkok; uj, Jakarta; uk, Kuala Lumpur; ul, Singapore; um, Hong Kong; un, Taipei; uo, Manila; up, Bangkok; uq, Jakarta; ur, Kuala Lumpur; us, Singapore; ut, Hong Kong; uv, Taipei; uv, Manila; vw, Bangkok; vx, Jakarta; vy, Kuala Lumpur; vz, Singapore; wa, Hong Kong; wb, Taipei; wc, Manila; wd, Bangkok; we, Jakarta; wf, Kuala Lumpur; wg, Singapore; wh, Hong Kong; wi, Taipei; wj, Manila; wk, Bangkok; wl, Jakarta; wm, Kuala Lumpur; wn, Singapore; wo, Hong Kong; wp, Taipei; wq, Manila; wr, Bangkok; ws, Jakarta; wt, Kuala Lumpur; wx, Singapore; wy, Hong Kong; wz, Taipei; xa, Manila; xb, Bangkok; xc, Jakarta; xd, Kuala Lumpur; xe, Singapore; xf, Hong Kong; xg, Taipei; xh, Manila; xi, Bangkok; xj, Jakarta; xk, Kuala Lumpur; xl, Singapore; xm, Hong Kong; xn, Taipei; xo, Manila; xp, Bangkok; xq, Jakarta; xr, Kuala Lumpur; xs, Singapore; xt, Hong Kong; xu, Taipei; xv, Manila; xw, Bangkok; xy, Jakarta; xy, Kuala Lumpur; yz, Singapore; za, Hong Kong; zb, Taipei; zc, Manila; zd, Bangkok; ze, Jakarta; zf, Kuala Lumpur; zg, Singapore; zh, Hong Kong; zi, Taipei; zj, Manila; zk, Bangkok; zl, Jakarta; zm, Kuala Lumpur; zn, Singapore; zo, Hong Kong; zp, Taipei; zq, Manila; zr, Bangkok; zs, Jakarta; zt, Kuala Lumpur; zu, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; 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zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; zv, Bangkok; zv, Jakarta; zv, Kuala Lumpur; zv, Singapore; zv, Hong Kong; zv, Taipei; zv, Manila; 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House builders voice fear of rate rise threat to recovery in sales

By Andrew Verity

HOUSE BUILDERS and construction companies yesterday reported much-improved profits but warned that higher interest rates could damage the recovery in sales.

Bovis, the British house-builder, saw its profits rise by 60 per cent in its first year as a separately-listed company. But Malcolm Harris, the group's chief executive, warned interest rates must not rise if the market was to continue to expand.

"The reduction in retail sales last month and the very high pound, means that in our view there is no need whatsoever

that interest rates should rise," he said. "In fact we would hope over the next two years they should moderate as we see an alignment of European rates."

Mr Harris said the group nevertheless planned significant expansion in the north of England. It has doubled the size of its land holdings in big northern provincial towns. "The prime areas of the Midlands and the North are showing an element of catching up in terms of price increases," he said.

Bovis now holds a total of 2,200 acres of land, giving it the potential to build over 13,000 homes. Its average home sold for £92,000 in 1997, up slightly from

£90,100 in the previous year. Bovis, which last December was spun off from its former parent, P&O, reported profits of £37.3m, up from £23.2m last year. Shares rose yesterday by 15p to 261.5p.

Amec, the construction and engineering group, reported a rise in profits of 26 per cent to £47.5m, including a doubling of earnings at its house building subsidiary, Fairclough Homes.

Amec said Fairclough had benefited from a buoyant marketplace for property in the South-east where prices for its homes had risen by 24 per cent over 1997. The average price was now £107,000.

Amec's engineering operations saw a return to profitability at its manufacturing operations in Newcastle. It now has £3bn of orders, up by 9 per cent from a year earlier.

Sydney Gilbrand, the chairman of Amec, said prospects for future profit growth for the company were "very good indeed". Market conditions were more favourable than they had been for 10 years.

After being stung by the 1990s property slump, the group has fought hard to reduce its exposure to cyclical swings in the property market. Whereas large-scale building projects made up 85 per cent of its business in

1987, this has now been reduced to 60 per cent.

Travis Perkins, the timber and building materials merchant, said it expected housing sales to be subdued under current market conditions. A strong pound was also keeping down prices for exports.

Reporting pre-tax profits up 25 per cent to £49.6m in the first quarter, Tony Travis, the group's chairman, said: "Although the continuing strength of sterling is putting downward pressure on the average cost price of our products, our like for like sales in the first two months of the current year are 10 per cent ahead of the figure for the same period of 1997."

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



WHEN Andrew Loughurst, once regarded as heir apparent to the top job at Lloyds TSB, quit as a director and chairman of the Cheltenham & Gloucester subsidiary in January, there was much gnashing of teeth in the West Country. Mr Loughurst's job had been "reorganised" out of existence by the Lombard Street establishment, ending his 30 year career with the C&G.

It all seemed very unfair, after the flamboyant Mr Loughurst had built the building society into what many regarded as the most efficient mortgage-making machine in the country. Now Mr Loughurst's successor has been appointed, in the form of John Bays, formerly deputy chairman of the C&G.

Meanwhile Sir Brian Pitman continues to go on and on as chairman of the parent group Lloyds TSB, with Peter Elwood, the former Barclays and TSB high flyer, now well ensconced as chief executive. We wish Mr Loughurst well.

PETER BIRCH, who retired as chief executive of Abbey National at the end of last month, has been appointed chairman of Trinity International, the UK's largest regional newspaper group. Trinity owns the *Liverpool Echo*, *Belfast Telegraph* and *Western Mail*, as well as 120 other titles.

Mr Birch already has a string of non-executive directorships, including Argos, Dalgety and Land Securities. He spent most of his career as a marketing man with Gillette before cutting a dash in the City. He joined Abbey in 1984 and steered the building society through the very first demutualisation.

The directors at Trinity can relax, though, since they don't need floating. Mr Birch certainly isn't doing the new job out of any need for cash, since he's still sitting on a mountain of Abbey National options, which some say is now worth north of £6m.

Mr Birch replaces David Snedden, who is retiring after 15 years with Trinity and four years as chairman. Mr Snedden said recently that "the temptation to spend more time with my family, consultancy and fishing rod, although not necessarily in that order, is irresistible."

SIR Brian Jenkins, former Lord Mayor of London and ex head of audit at Coopers & Lybrand, was in rollicking form as head of the judging panel at yesterday's prize presentation for this year's Charity Annual Report and Accounts Awards.

Trevor McDonald, the popular ITN newscaster, was the guest of honour at the awards, held at the Institute of Chartered Accountants in the City. The ICA and the Charity Forum co-sponsored the awards.

Sir Brian kicked off the proceedings by telling the assembled audience that "judges get older and accounts get better." He slightly blunted this claim by adding that fully 50 per cent of entrants to the competition had failed at the first hurdle simply because the applicants had failed to either date or sign their entry.

Confusion then reigned as the winners were presented with their prizes of £2,000 each. Sir Brian not realising that the winners were supposed to contribute a few words of their own to the proceedings. When this was pointed out to him, the first prize winners were invited back on stage to say their piece. Mr McDonald, exhibiting his true professionalism, remained unfazed by the ensuing scenes of chaos.

As the last winners were ushered from the stage, Sir Brian declared: "I think that just about wraps it up. I've had rather an accident-prone afternoon. Is there anything else I should do?"

To which the president of the ICA, Chris Laine, exclaimed: "I think now you should sit down." Which, to Sir Brian's credit, he did.

MICHAEL JACKSON, deputy chairman of Sage, the designer of accounting software, and founding chairman of Elderstreet Downing VCT, a venture capital trust, is a keen tennis player, he tells me.

Mr Jackson set up Elderstreet eight years ago, and its directors now include Luke Johnson, the founder of Pizza Express.

Anyway, Mr Jackson tells me excitedly that he once beat Tim Henman, Britain's great tennis hope. The entrepreneur's victory came at the Rye Tennis Championships in Sussex in 1986. At the time Mr Jackson was 36 and Tim Henman was just 11. Mr Jackson beat the future tennis star 6-4 after a disputed line call. Mr Jackson recalls: "Tim was so small that people looked at me as if I was a child beater."

IT IS appropriate in the week of the Cheltenham Festival that University Diagnostics is launching a DNA database service for horses. University Diagnostics is a division of LGC (until 18 months ago The Laboratory of the Government Chemist). It is offering a service which will enable you to trace your horse if it gets stolen.

The company already has a world beater - a service which sexes parrots. It works in the same way as the horse DNA operation, and is currently helping scores of European zoos in their breeding programmes.

The company tells me that parrots don't have any external reproductive organs, and you can kill them by "prodding around", so now they take DNA samples from the feathers. The tests cost a mere £22.50 a shot.

Courtaulds Textiles beats profit forecasts

COURTAULDS Textiles, the clothing and fabric company, yesterday set itself a target of beating its historic profit peak of £46m in the coming year. Colin Dyer, the chief executive said: "We aim to beat our historic profit peak, which was around £46m, this year."

His comment came as the company posted a 38 per cent increase in profits before tax and exceptional items of £41.2m in the year to 31 December. The 1997 result exceeded most brokers' forecasts which centred on £40m.

Mr Dyer said: "The French economy is beginning to wake up a bit. Consumer demand is a little stronger there. French market demand for the group's hosiery remained weak in 1997, particularly during the peak autumn selling season, he said.

"We are also seeing a steady-ing of the trading environment in Asia. The environment seems to have calmed. Our order books did not suffer too badly



On show: Colin Dyer, chief executive with models wearing Courtaulds Textiles' latest range. Photograph: Daniel Newman

and we are beginning to see better margins," said Mr Dyer.

The Asia-Pacific region makes up just 5 per cent of group sales, which increased by £6m to £932.3m at constant exchange rates in 1997. About £310m of

the group's turnover came from sales to Marks & Spencer.

The company's lace and stretch fabrics division recovered strongly in 1997 to post pre-exceptional profits of £19.2m, up from £12.9m, helped

by buoyant demand in the United States and Europe.

The group's lingerie and hosiery division saw a slight fall in pre-exceptional profit to £11.4m in 1997. Its casualwear and underwear division lifted

pre-exceptional profit to £14.0m in 1997 from £11.6m in 1996. The company set a return on average capital employed target of 17 per cent to be achieved in the year ending December 1999.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Sterling	Spot	1 month	3 month	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 month
UK	100.00				0.9994	0.9993	0.9992	0.9991
Australia	2.581	25.00	25.00		1.2502	1.2500	1.2500	1.2500
Austria	2.464	24.64	24.64		1.2502	1.2500	1.2500	1.2500
Belgium	6.297	62.97	62.97		3.7725	3.7725	3.7725	3.7725
Canada	2.366	23.66	23.66		1.4886	1.4886	1.4886	1.4886
Denmark	1.162	11.62	11.62		6.5725	6.5725	6.5725	6.5725
EU	1.336	13.36	13.36		1.0558	1.0558	1.0558	1.0558
France	9.206	92.06	92.06		5.3388	5.3388	5.3388	5.3388
Germany	1.253	12.53	12.53		1.0138	1.0138	1.0138	1.0138
Greece	3.352	33.52	33.52		1.8301	1.8301	1.8301	1.8301
Italy	5.389	53.89	53.89		3.2220	3.2220	3.2220	3.2220
Japan	12.73	127.3	127.3		7.7453	7.7453	7.7453	7.7453
Netherlands	1.253	12.53	12.53		1.2750	1.2750	1.2750	1.2750
New Zealand	1.253	12.53	12.53		1.2750	1.2750	1.2750	1.2750
Portugal	20.48	204.8	204.8		1.2750	1.2750	1.2750	1.2750
Spain	16.66	166.6	166.6		1.2750	1.2750	1.2750	1.2750
Sweden	8.466	84.66	84.66		1.2750	1.2750	1.2750	1.2750
Switzerland	1.253	12.53	12.53		1.2750	1.2750	1.2750	1.2750
USA	1.535	15.35	15.35		1.2750	1.2750	1.2750	1.2750

Interest Rates

UK	Germany	US	Japan
Base	7.25%	Discount	2.50%
Prime	8.50%	Prime	5.00%
Discount	5.50%	Discount	5.00%
3M Euro	5.50%	3M Euro	5.00%
6M Euro	5.50%	6M Euro	5.00%
12M Euro	5.50%	12M Euro	5.00%
3M US	5.50%	3M US	5.00%
6M US	5.50%	6M US	5.00%
12M US	5.50%	12M US	5.00%

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est floor	Open
Long GB	Jun-98	107.72	107.22	107.50	107.50
10 GB	Jun-98	107.72	107.22	107.50	107.50
10 GB	Jun-98	107.72	107.22	107.50	107.50
10 GB	Jun-98	107.72	107.22	107.50	107.50

Industrial Metals

Aluminum	Cash	3 month	Chg	LME stocks	Chg
Aluminum HG	1430	1431	-250	1457	-1458
Aluminum HG	1430	1431	-250	1457	-1458
Aluminum HG	1430	1431	-250	1457	-1458

Precious Metals

Platinum	Cash	3 month	Chg	LME stocks	Chg
Platinum	4700	4700	275	4700	275
Platinum	4700	4700	275	4700	275

Agricultural

Cocoa	Cash	3 month	Chg	LME stocks	Chg
Cocoa	1000	1000	100	1000	100
Cocoa	1000	1000	100	1000	100

Other Stock Rates

Country	Sterling	Spot	1 month	3 month
UK	100.00			
Australia	2.581	25.00	25.00	
Austria	2.464	24.64	24.64	

Money Market Rates

Overnight	1 week	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
Overnight	1 week	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
Overnight	1 week	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year

Commodity Indices

Index	1970=100	1970=100	1970=100
Index	1970=100	1970=100	1970=100
Index	1970=100	1970=100	1970=100

Gold Prices

Gold	Cash	3 month	Chg	LME stocks	Chg
Gold	1000	1000	100	1000	100
Gold	1000	1000	100	1000	100

Other Softs

Apr Live Cattle	Cash	3 month	Chg	LME stocks	Chg
Apr Live Cattle	Cash	3 month	Chg	LME stocks	Chg
Apr Live Cattle	Cash	3 month	Chg	LME stocks	Chg

Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est floor	Open
Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est floor	Open
Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est floor	Open

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price
Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price
Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price
Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price
Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price
Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price
Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price
Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price
Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price

A bitter Business for poor Nicholls

By Greg Wood
at Cheltenham

BEFORE the Gold Cup, Paul Nicholls told an interviewer that in his dreams he had imagined every possible way that the race might unfold for his runner, See More Business, from an easy victory to a fall at the first. It seems unlikely, however, that the list included the chaser's eventual fate - carried out at the 12th, when Cyborg broke down and dragged both See More Business and Indian Tracker past the wrong side of the fence.

Indian Tracker, a stablemate of Cyborg at Martin Pipe's Wellington yard, was among the outsiders, but See More Business set off as the second favourite, and the most obvious standard bearer of the British challenge to Doran's Pride.

The stewards inquired into the incident, and decided that Cyborg lost his action as the result of a pelvic injury, giving Tony McCoy his jockey, no option but to pull out of the race. The officials took no further action.

while Cyborg was taken to the racecourse hospital for examination. It was unclear last night whether he was fit enough to travel back to Pipe's yard.

The injury to Cyborg was a bitter blow for all concerned, but McCoy more than made it up to the punters later in the afternoon. A treble in the last three races of the meeting was completed by victory for Blow-

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Kustom Kit Kate
(Southwell 2.10)
NB: Mersey Beat
(Folkestone 3.00)

ing Wind, the hot favourite, in the County Hurdle.

The success earned his connections a £50,000 bonus offered by the sponsors of last Saturday's Imperial Cup to any horse which could win their race and an event at the Festival. Out in the ring, however, the cost was much greater. After a series of bad results for the bookmakers, they had laid Blowing Wind at all prices down to 15-8, knowing that the other 27 entries were running

for them. Salvation appeared to be at hand when Bless Me Sister strode to the front on the turn for home, but Blowing Wind came late to snatch victory and as dusk fell over Cheltenham, long lines of backers were still queuing to be paid.

Another successful punter was Matt Archer, the joint-owner of Upgrade, who started backing his runner for the Triumph Hurdle several weeks ago with a £500 each-way bet at 33-1, added to his stake as the race approached. When Upgrade charged up the hill to repel the persistent challenge of City Hall in yesterday's opening race, Archer collected an estimated £150,000 from his betting alone.

This was a brave performance by Upgrade, who was at the head of affairs throughout but still had enough in reserve to stay on dourly in the closing stages. If his effort has not drained him too severely, he will run in the Glenlivet Hurdle at Aintree next month, with the 1999 Champion Hurdle the long-term target. If Archer wants to play up his winnings,



Andrew Thornton passes all the glory on to his Gold Cup-winning mount, Cool Dawn, yesterday. Photograph: Peter Jay

Ladbrokes offer 25-1 for next year's championship.

There were visions of future Festivals to watch the Stayers' Hurdle, won by Jenny Pittman's Princess. "He will be chasing next season," the trainer said, "and we may take in the Royal & Sun Alliance Chase before winning the Millennium Gold Cup."

McCoy's treble in the final three races - the first two legs were Eddredon Bleu in the Grand Annual Chase and Cyfor Malla in the Cathcart - ensured that he finished the meeting as the leading rider, with five winners, more than any of his rivals could manage. For Adrian Maguire, however, the week finished in the worst possible

way. Riding at the Festival for the first time in four years, he had drawn a blank before the Grand Annual, in which he took a heavy fall from Zabadi. Maguire sustained a broken collarbone as well as knee and hand injuries, and was taken to Cheltenham General Hospital. A spokeswoman said that Maguire was conscious and sta-

ble, but would be detained overnight, and possibly longer. It was a bad day for Maguire all round as his old friend Barton Bank was retired after finishing eighth in the Gold Cup. The Tote recorded a new record turnover of £7,296,310 for the three days of the Cheltenham Festival, an increase of £445,195 on last year's total.

Golden day for racing's fall guy



KEN JONES

IT isn't that long ago since the word on Andrew Thornton was that he would struggle to stay on board if they glued him to the saddle.

Thornton came off so often - seven times consecutively during one dark period - that he was advised to seek alternative employment. Kim Bailey, the trainer Thornton joined after riding successfully in the north for Arthur Stephenson, more or less fired him.

Thornton's girlfriend, Jill Richardson, shared as much in the anguish of a career that was going nowhere as she did in the joy of his Gold Cup victory yesterday on the 25-1 shot Cool Dawn. A resolute redhead, who spoke while receiving calls of congratulation on her mobile telephone, she set out the hard times to put Thornton's achievement into proper perspective.

"Watching Andrew ride a couple of years ago it wasn't a case of would he fall but when. Soon he had no confidence at all. It was sad because he was riding horses that had no chance of winning or show his ability." Probably, the thought in Thornton's mind then was that he had made a wrong career move.

A rugby footballer of such promise at Barnard Castle, the public school that turned out Rob Andrew and the Underwood brothers, Thornton had the potential to follow them into England's colours. Instead, he chose the rough and tumble of an even harder game and the pain that goes with it.

The painful period with Bailey was a test of his resolution. In one season alone Thornton suffered seven fractures of the collar bone. "He just wouldn't give up," his girlfriend said. "Kim Bailey made it pretty clear that he didn't think Andrew had much of a future but he asked to stay on in the yard." Things took an upward turn for Thornton when he rode a double in Scotland. There was a technical change, too.

The tallest jockey in the weighing room at Cheltenham yesterday, Thornton was advised to lengthen his stirrups. In reply to one of the many calls she received in the unsaddling enclosure, Jill Richardson said: "Yes, the advice paid off."

Riding long made such a difference to Thornton's balance that his career was transformed. He struck back with 26 winners and won the King George VI Chase at Kempton last Boxing Day on See More Business for Paul Nicholls.

On Wednesday came Thornton's second Festival winner when he brought French Holly home in the Royal and Sun Alliance Chase. At a party to celebrate French Holly's victory Thornton passed on the champagne. "You carry on," he said to friends, "but I've got a big day tomorrow."

Going off at a price long enough to show that not a great deal was expected of it, Cool Dawn would make a mess of general predictions. When they went down to the start on a day of warm sunshine most eyes were on Doran's Pride who was well backed to bring Ireland another victory.

As emphasised by a flood of money for Florida Pearl on Wednesday, short prices don't deter the Irish if they can smell a winner and there was plenty riding on Doran's Pride when the field set out in the Gold Cup. The sight of Indian Tracker and See More Business being taken out of the race by the suddenly lame Cyborg strengthened confidence in Doran's Pride but a mistake three out for Ireland's principle challenge.

No Irish celebrations this time, no repeat of the wild excitement that greeted Charlie Swan when he returned to the unsaddling enclosure with Istabraq on Tuesday. It made no difference to Thornton. Yet he had stayed in the game, ridden out the bad days and nobody could take this one away from him.

Folkestone

2.00 Tolly Years
2.30 Secret Bid
3.00 Veridian
3.30 Peace Lord

GOING: Good.
① Course is 5m west of town off A20. Western station (service from London, Charing Cross) adjoins course. ADMISSION: £2.00 (under-16s free). CAR PARK: Free. ② 1st Race: 1.10pm. 2nd Race: 1.40pm. 3rd Race: 2.10pm. 4th Race: 2.40pm. 5th Race: 3.10pm. 6th Race: 3.40pm. 7th Race: 4.10pm. 8th Race: 4.40pm. 9th Race: 5.10pm. 10th Race: 5.40pm. 11th Race: 6.10pm. 12th Race: 6.40pm. 13th Race: 7.10pm. 14th Race: 7.40pm. 15th Race: 8.10pm. 16th Race: 8.40pm. 17th Race: 9.10pm. 18th Race: 9.40pm. 19th Race: 10.10pm. 20th Race: 10.40pm. 21st Race: 11.10pm. 22nd Race: 11.40pm. 23rd Race: 12.10pm. 24th Race: 12.40pm. 25th Race: 1.10pm. 26th Race: 1.40pm. 27th Race: 2.10pm. 28th Race: 2.40pm. 29th Race: 3.10pm. 30th Race: 3.40pm. 31st Race: 4.10pm. 32nd Race: 4.40pm. 33rd Race: 5.10pm. 34th Race: 5.40pm. 35th Race: 6.10pm. 36th Race: 6.40pm. 37th Race: 7.10pm. 38th Race: 7.40pm. 39th Race: 8.10pm. 40th Race: 8.40pm. 41st Race: 9.10pm. 42nd Race: 9.40pm. 43rd Race: 10.10pm. 44th Race: 10.40pm. 45th Race: 11.10pm. 46th Race: 11.40pm. 47th Race: 12.10pm. 48th Race: 12.40pm. 49th Race: 1.10pm. 50th Race: 1.40pm. 51st Race: 2.10pm. 52nd Race: 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Veteran Burnell bundled into Scots' front row

Rugby Union

By Chris Hewett

WHEN Paul Burnell hopped aboard the first available flight from London to Edinburgh yesterday, he found himself so comprehensively outnumbered by 22 England players with Calcutta Cup glory on their minds that he must have felt like parachuting back off again. When he renews his acquaintance with the Red Rose army on Sunday, the odds will be more in his favour: man against man, 15 against 15.

Burnell, a Test Lion five years ago but, at 33, deep into

rugby middle age, was called into the Scotland front row yesterday when Mattie Stewart, the first-choice tight head from Northampton, withdrew with shoulder trouble. He leapfrogged several higher-ranked contenders, including George Graham of Newcastle, who remains on the bench, a victim of his own versatility.

"We were looking for an out-and-out tight-head prop," explained the Scottish team manager, Arthur Hastings. "Most of the other people were merely loose-heads capable of moving across to the other side of the scrum." A brave man, Hastings. Some of Scotland's more formi-

dable No 1s - Ian McLauchlan, Jim Aitken and David Sole to name but three - will be less than amused at being described as "mere" anything.

Jim Telfer, the national coach, pointed to Burnell's Test experience as the deciding factor and there is no doubt that the London Scottish captain has served his time in the trenches. First capped against England at Twickenham in 1989, he featured in six consecutive Five Nations' Championships and two World Cups before making the last of his 41 appearances against Western Samoa in 1995.

And if 30 months is a long sabbatical from international

rugby, it has nothing on the six years separating Dean Ryan's last England cap from Sunday's tribal set-to at Murrayfield. Indeed, if Burnell makes a decent fist of this one, he may yet approach the record 50 caps collected by Sandy Carmichael between 1967 and 1978.

However, the front row is an area of obvious weakness for the Scots and they could have done without a reshuffle at this late stage. Burnell will have to introduce himself to his hooker, the West of Scotland captain Gordon Bulloch, and while the latter stages of his Test career overlapped with that of his fellow prop, Dave Hinton, they

started only the Western Samoa match as the first-choice pairing.

There was less joyful news for another member of Scotland's veteran brigade yesterday. Ian Smith, the former Gloucester open-side flanker now plying an autumnal trade at Moseley, was ruled out of this summer's tour of Australia because of troublesome knee ligaments - his first serious injury in 15 years of top-flight activity. Smith had already dropped off the bench for the Calcutta Cup match and will undergo surgery today to repair his left knee.

Meanwhile, the chief executive of the Scottish Rugby Union, Bill Watson, had more

complex, if less painful, problems to negotiate. The SRU was taken to task by Donald Gormie, the Liberal Democrat MP for Edinburgh West, for succumbing to television pressure and shifting the big game to a Sunday for the first time in its 127-year history.

Indeed, the honourable member went so far as to introduce an Early Day Motion "regretting" the move, thereby leaving Watson no choice but to use similar language in defence of his august organisation. "It is regrettable that an MP should introduce a motion that is factually incorrect," he fumed. "It is also regrettable that other

parliamentarians should put their signatures to it without contacting the SRU to verify the fact that we had no choice but to hold the match on the day requested by the BBC, who hold the broadcasting rights.

"They have the right within their contract with the Five Nations Committee to specify both the days on which matches should be played and the kick-off times. However, because of spectators' travelling arrangements and other practical considerations, we would prefer all Five Nations matches to be played on a Saturday and will continue to make that view clearly to the BBC."

The lower orders set to attack status quo

Chris Hewett sees surprises ahead for the home nations in the qualifying series for the World Cup

IT WOULD be stretching a point to suggest that Taiwan's 34-29 victory over Sri Lanka in an absolute humdinger of an Asia Round B tie in downtown Bangkok will send the book-makers rushing to revise their ante-post odds for next year's World Cup. The All Blacks are unlikely to lose much sleep worrying about the Asian threat; back in 1995, the Japanese took the game to New Zealand for the best part of 20 seconds before succumbing 145-17.

All the same, the Taiwan result - and a few dozen others like it - has given shape and substance to a tournament finally ready to leave the backwaters and take its place in the sporting mainstream. By the end of May, we will know the precise make-up of the final qualifying rounds - rounds that will involve England, Scotland, Ireland, Italy, Argentina and the major powers of the South Sea islands. Oh, and Australia, too. The 1991 world champions also have to prove themselves worthy of a seat at the top table.

England must play two qualifiers this autumn and as things stand, they will be against the Netherlands and, rather more demanding, Romania. (The Ukraine may yet have something to say about that assumption, but their 35-13 defeat in Amsterdam last November left them looking more like Chicken Kiev than Dynamo Kiev.) The Scots, meanwhile, can expect to face two from Spain, Portugal and, er, Germany, who currently stand joint top of Europe Round B Pool 3, if that makes any sense at all.

Any dyed-in-the-wool rugger-bugger traditionalists inclined to poke fun at the lower end of the world order - to mock Guyana's inability to field a side against Brazil, to giggle uncontrollably at Bulgaria's 89-0 hammering by Latvia, to fall about laughing at the very thought of Andorra winning an entire qualifying pool - will wake up with a start when they realise the seriousness of forthcoming events. Especially if they happen to be Irish, who will almost certainly cop Italy in one of their autumn qualifying matches, or Australian. The Wallabies are about to risk life and limb in a three-match collision with Western Samoa, Fiji and Tonga. The very best of British to them.

Only four countries have pre-qualified for the finals proper: the top three from 1995 - South Africa, New Zealand and France - plus Wales as hosts. Provided England avoid being turned over by the Dutch, they will be based on home soil in a group already including the All Blacks. The Romanians will probably join them along with a rank outsider from a newly instigated and mind-blowingly complicated repêchage arrangement.

South Africa will be based in Scotland and despite a likely Murrayfield collision with the Scots themselves, they appear to have secured the most comfortable ride into the last eight. The remaining groups are far more competitive: France will probably face Western Samoa and Canada. Ireland can expect to come up against both Australia and the fast-improving Italians, while Wales may well have to pick a route past Argentina and one of the South Sea big-bitters - something they famously failed to achieve the last time they undertook World Cup business on home turf.

Just to make it harder for the home nations, none of whom will start as clear favourites to win their group, the organisers have inserted a nasty little play-off round before the quarter-finals; a move that could see easily see England and the Scots thrown together in a desperate confrontation that would make this weekend's Calcutta Cup match look like a vicarage whist drive. Still, they should worry. Poor old Tahiti lost 92-6 to Papua New Guinea in their most recent World Cup tie. Presumably, the coach is on borrowed time.

Supermen myth is laid bare by United's failings

SOMETHING was gained in the translation. When the Monaco president, Jean-Louis Campora, reflected on reaching the semi-finals of the European Cup he said: "Tonight we beat a myth of football. Manchester United are a myth."

Campora's happy, smiling demeanour and his politician's breeding - his day job is the equivalent of Prime Minister of the principality - suggested he had intended to be more diplomatic. Legend was what he meant although, unwittingly, he may have stumbled upon a half-truth. United's supposed invincibility had been built on myth.

Not so long ago it was a popular assertion: Manchester United were the best team in Europe. Forget the fact they had yet to win the trophy to confirm the premise, it was the thing that managers clung to when their charges were being walloped. What can we do when we're playing supermen?

The last two months have laid bare the hollowness of those beliefs. Maybe United, when they have all their players at their disposal, are a match for anyone in the continent. Even then it is only a maybe. The proof is in the beating.

Since United were serenely leading their supposed closest challengers, Chelsea, 5-0 during what seemed to be the season's defining moment on 4 January, the form of the champions has been little above relegation fodder. They have gone out of the European Cup and FA Cup, while in the Premiership they have scored nine goals and gained 14 points out of a potential 30.

The table which appeared to be about to heave with glittering prizes has been left nearly bare and even the domestic championship, which everyone assumed was theirs for the taking, has gone from being a formality to a task



Alex Ferguson needs to buy quality players if his ambition to dominate Europe is to be fulfilled, says Guy Hodgson

fraught with difficulties. Old Trafford is coming to terms with a disagreeable truth: United might not win anything this season.

"Now, winning the Premiership has become even more important than it was before," Peter Schmeichel said amid the debris of the dreams of European supremacy. "With all the international players we have it does not bear thinking about that we might not be in the Champions' League next season."

All the players. That is where people on the outside with the club's interests at heart differ from those within. On Wednesday night Phil Neville said that no team in Europe could easily shrug off long-term injuries to Schmeichel, Gary Pallister, Roy Keane and Ryan Giggs, not to mention the debilitating niggles that have struck Paul Scholes and Gary Neville. Agreed. Where others might demur is over the quality of the replacements.

On Wednesday when United were looking for a match-winner to unlock a Monaco defence that was tiring, who did Alex Ferguson have at his disposal? From a look at the substitutes' bench either the spent force that is Brian McClair or the unproven one that is Ben Thornley. Pertinently, the manager chose to ignore both of them.

Without the broadsword, never mind the rapier, he had to resort to the bludgeon in the shape of Henning Berg, who was sent forward like some ageing battler to be embarrassed by swifter, more skilful opponents. Lower division clubs

do things like that in search of a sucker punch in FA Cup matches - but future European champions?

Afterwards, Ferguson, the disappointment cutting deep lines in his florid features, mumbled about not getting he breaks you need in Europe and in a sense he was right. United should have had a penalty when Martin Djedjic jumped with his arms raised at Teddy Sheringham's overhead cross and the hugely impressive David Beckham might have contrived something spectacular, but the stark truth over two legs was that Monaco were the better team.

You make your own breaks, and Ferguson's inability to strengthen his squad even as it began to succumb to injury has been the principal reason why they did not. It seemed good business when Karel Poborsky was sold to Benfica, but the disinclination to buy a replacement was not.

The Czech winger might not have been quite good enough for the United first team, but he would still have been better than Thornley, whose early promise refuses to blossom. Now, without Giggs, there is no one with the speed on the flanks to turn

defenders and force crosses from uncomfortable positions.

Perhaps if there were, the attack would begin to inspire fear again. Andy Cole had a good game against Monaco, but did not get a sniff of a chance while the assertions that Sheringham is the ideal replacement for Eric

Cantona are becoming more fanciful by the week. A good link player he might be, but the England striker has a diminishing ability to turn games and, no matter the shortcomings of Cantona in Europe, he was peerless as a scorer of point-winning goals in the Premiership.



Exposed: United's Denis Irwin, Michael Clegg and Nicky Butt troop out of the European Cup

Photograph: Emipics

NEW YEAR IRRESOLUTION: UNITED'S RECORD IN '98

January	February	March
4 Chelsea 3 Man Utd 5 (FA Cup)	7 Man Utd 1 Bolton Wanderers 1 (L)	4 Middlesbrough 0 Man Utd 0 (European Cup)
10 Man Utd 2 Tottenham 0 (League)	15 Man Utd 1 Barnsley 1 (FAC)	7 Sheffield Wed 2 Man Utd 0 (L)
19 Southampton 1 Man Utd 0 (L)	18 Aston Villa 0 Man Utd 2 (L)	11 Man Utd 1 West Ham 1 (L)
24 Man Utd 5 Watford 1 (FAC)	21 Man Utd 2 Derby County 0 (L)	14 Man Utd 0 Arsenal 1 (L)
31 Man Utd 0 Leicester City 1 (L)	25 Barnsley 3 Man Utd 2 (FAC)	18 Man Utd 1 Monaco 1 (EC)
	28 Chelsea 0 Man Utd 1 (L)	

(United lose on away goals)

Scots' TV boost

By Alan Nixon

SCOTTISH football fans are in for a culture shock next season, with up to 30 top-flight games being played on a Thursday night. The "breakaway" clubs are negotiating a £20m two-year television deal with Sky Sports that will be revealed shortly.

However, there is a large price to pay for the revenue being distributed by the satellite company, with the vast majority of the matches being put on at an unfamiliar time.

There are already objections within the new Premier League about the proposed switch, with Celtic particularly unhappy at losing so many Saturday games. The TV deal will guarantee 30 live broadcasts.

with 24 to involve the Old Firm of Celtic and Rangers. That will mean huge disruption of the fixture calendar and is bound to cause uproar among supporters, with both Rangers and Celtic drawing many fans from all over Scotland and beyond.

The TV contract is worth £10m a year, split among the 10 clubs. Rangers and Celtic will pocket around £1.5m each, while the smaller clubs can expect at least £500,000 during the season - money which will help keep some of those teams with less support afloat.

● Celtic will host the Old Firm Scottish Cup semi-final against Rangers, following a drawing of lots yesterday.

TENNIS SCOTTISH CUP Semi-final: Sat 4 April Celtic v Rangers (5.30 at Parkhead).

League football at Stevenage?

Non-League notebook

By Rupert Metcalf

STEVENAGE BOROUGH lost their last chance of honours this season when they were surprisingly beaten at home by Slough Town in the quarter-finals of the FA Umbro Trophy last weekend. Despite gaining some revenge with a 4-2 win over Slough on Monday, the Hertfordshire side languish in the bottom half of the GM Vauxhall Conference - but their Broadhall Way stadium may yet play host to Nationwide League football next season.

Victor Green, the Stevenage chairman, confirmed yesterday that his club are engaged in talks about a ground-sharing

agreement with Barnet. "We can offer Barnet what they don't have: a stadium fit for the Football League," he said.

The Third Division club have fewer than the Football League minimum of 6,000 seats at their Underhill ground. The deadline for rectifying that situation is August this year and, with a proposed new development at Copthall stadium being delayed by planning problems, Barnet must look elsewhere. They had previously been linked with a temporary move to Enfield or Boreham Wood.

One of the matches of the Conference season will take place at The Shay tomorrow, when the leaders, Halifax Town, take on second-placed Rushden & Diamonds. Tuesday's em-

phatic 5-1 home win over Morecambe took the West Yorkshire side 10 points clear of their rivals from Northamptonshire, who have a game in hand.

Ongoing building work at The Shay means that tomorrow's match is all-ticket, with a 3,500 crowd limit. Halifax are confident that the construction of new terraces at both ends of the stadium will be complete by the Football League's ground-grading deadline of 1 April. The eventual capacity, after the town's rugby league team have moved in, will be 15,000.

Rushden have risen rapidly up the table with four consecutive wins - and another three points for the Diamonds tomorrow will keep the championship race very much alive.

Emerson arrives

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY are to sign the former Benfica centre-back Emerson Thome until the end of the season. The 25-year-old has been on trial at Hillsborough and has played once for the reserves. No transfer fee is involved and the player does not need a work permit.

Reading yesterday moved swiftly to appoint Alan Pardew as their caretaker manager. The former Crystal Palace and Charlton player will take charge for tomorrow's match against Huddersfield. Terry Bullivant resigned as manager on Wednesday after nine defeats in 10 matches left the Royals second from bottom of the First Division.

The Walsall manager, Jan Sorensen, wants to join the

consortium which is poised to make a bid for control of the Second Division club. The decision of Jeff Bonser to resign as chairman this week and put his majority shareholding in the club and Bescot Stadium up for sale has left the Saddlers facing a potentially worrying future.

The midfielder Jamie Pollock joined Manchester City from Bolton Wanderers yesterday on a three-year contract in a £1m deal. However, City's manager, Joe Royle, has been thwarted in a move for the West Bromwich Albion striker Andy Hunt, who is injured.

The winger Martin Phillips, once rated a £10m prospect by Alan Ball, has returned to Exeter on loan from Manchester City.

Senior suspended for Sheffield's semi-final

Rugby League

By Dave Hadfield

KEITH SENIOR, the Sheffield Eagles' centre, will miss his side's Silk Cut Challenge Cup semi-final after being suspended for four games for his left hook on Barrie-Jon Mather in the last round.

Senior, twice capped by Great Britain, was given the ban

after he admitted striking Mather during the victory over Castleford last Saturday. His sentence means that he will be available for the Wembley final if Sheffield beat Salford next weekend, but he is appealing today against the length of his ban.

The League's acting chief executive, Neil Tunnicliffe, said that the choice of Watford for its first major rugby league match was a strategic one.

The Rugby League is to install a regional development officer in nearby Bedford and sees Watford as well placed for the Rugby League Conference, which is based in the South and Midlands.

Hemel Hempstead yesterday formally applied for League membership, the first amateur club to respond to an invitation to put forward their case for elevation to the Second Division.

Edwards feared for crew trapped below deck by fallen mast

Sailing

By Stuart Alexander

THE CRIPPLED catamaran Royal & Sun Alliance was heading slowly for Chile yesterday as the boat's skipper, Tracy Edwards, explained why a distress signal had been activated when the boat broke her mast in the Southern Ocean on Wednesday. "Not only were we faced with

the mess of a crumpled mast and all its accompanying rigging, there were several crew members trapped in the port hull," Edwards said yesterday. "It was extremely frightening for the girls below while we tried to move the debris and release them."

The beacon alerted rescue services, but they were not needed and the 92ft catamaran, which had been trying to beat the non-stop round the world

record of 71 days 14 hours, has set up a jury rig and small sail on the remaining 30ft of the 102ft mast.

That was enough for a speed of nine knots as Edwards and her 11-strong all-woman crew decide which port to make for on the coast of Chile, 2,000 miles away.

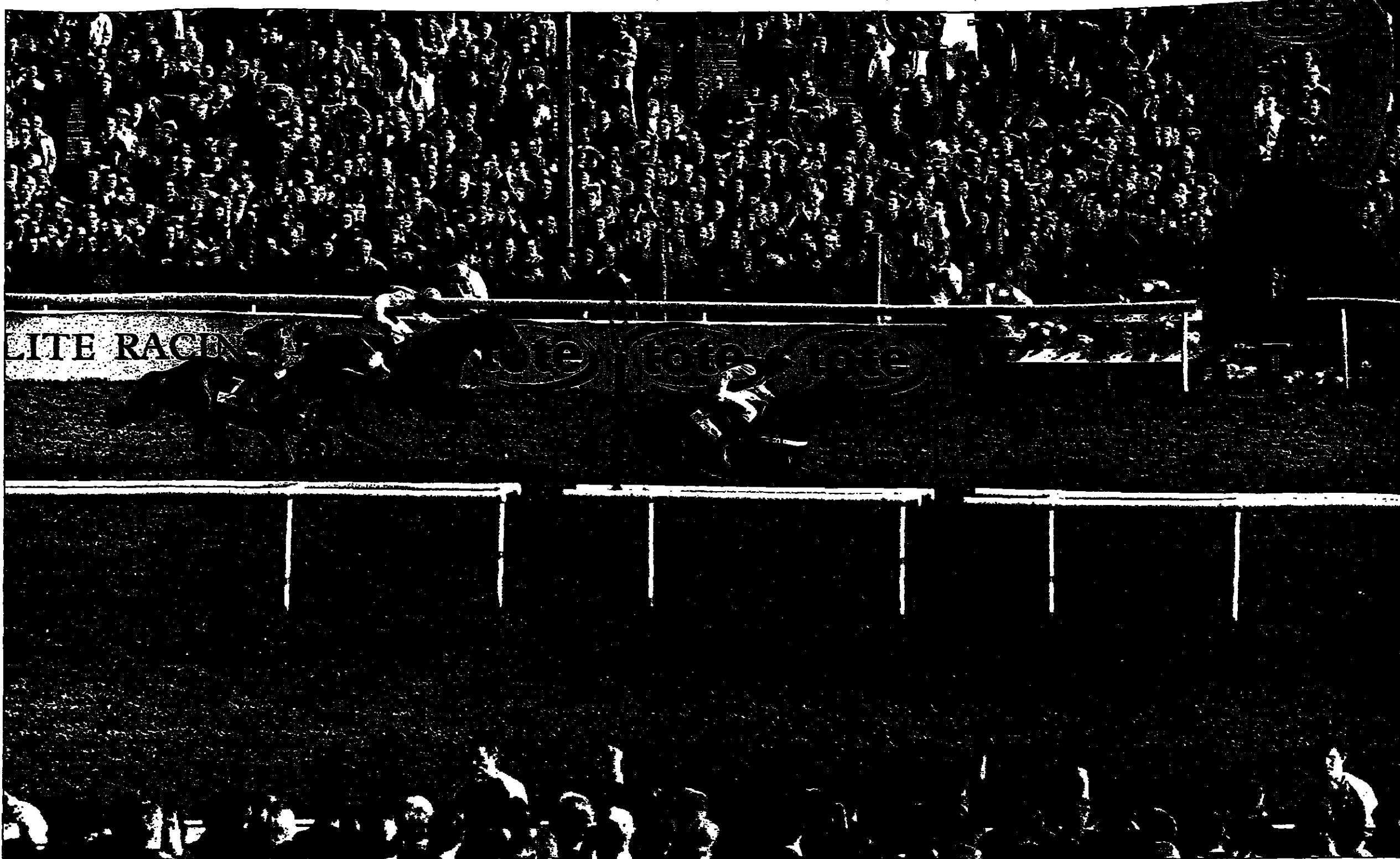
The war of nerves in the sixth leg of the Whitbread Round the World Race from Brazil to Port Lauderdale in Florida height-

ened yesterday. Britain's Lawrie Smith, in Silk Cut, was hanging on to a 17-mile lead in stifling conditions as the nine-boat fleet headed north to the Equator.

WHITBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE (4th leg, 4,750 miles, São Sebastião, Brazil to Port Lauderdale, USA): 1 Silk Cut (GB) L Smith 3,240 miles to finish; 2 West Cup (Morocco) G Dalton +172 miles behind; 3 Innovation Klemmer (Nor) K Frostad +125; 4 FI Langrange (Swi) P Cuyard +172; 5 Chinese Racing (US) J Kowalski +183; 6 Tashita (US) P Sandakope +182; 7 Brunel Sunray (Nor) R Hedder +221; 8 SF Education (Swi) G Gullou +337; 9 Swedish Match (Swi) G Krantz +434.

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Against all odds: Andrew Thornton and Cool Dawn strikes gold as they race past the post first at Cheltenham yesterday with Strong Promise, in second, and the favourite, Dorans Pride, left trailing in the gelding's wake. Photograph: Peter Jay

Cheltenham awakes to a Dawn raid

Racing

By Richard Edmondson
at Cheltenham

A HORSE bought to be a nice ladies' runaround won the Cheltenham Gold Cup yesterday. Cool Dawn, who was purchased as little more than an equine sofa for his owner, Dido Harding, proved himself in the fiercest crucible of National Hunt's blue riband.

As a rider of Cool Dawn, Dido is now an extinct species. The 10-year-old's new partner is Andrew Thornton, though his owner has not yet extinguished the thought of reclaiming the mount. "I live in hope that one day I will get to ride a Gold Cup winner in a race," she said yesterday.

"I got him about five years ago when I asked Robert [Al-

ner, yesterday's winning trainer] to find me a nice, safe ladies' point-to-pointer that might one day win a hunter-chase. He's a bit off-brief I suppose but I'm not complaining.

"We never expected him to be this good and even this morning we were saying that if he does his best and gets round we would really be delighted." Others had similar assessments of Cool Dawn's ability. He was allowed to go off at 25-1.

The gelding had not been the most prepossessing figure in a Cheltenham parade ring bathed in unusual Festival warmth. That honour belonged to the huge and intimidating horse that was to cause him the most discomfort. Strong Promise.

Alner had decided not to cloud Thornton's mind with any complex riding instructions. He didn't give him any at all.

The jockey himself developed just a single strategy. He was to lead from start to finish. Thus, Cool Dawn towed the field along until the definitive moment of the race on the approach to the 12th fence.

It was here that the injured Cyborg swerved off the course, taking out of the race both staminate Indian Tracker and the greatest hope of Britain, See More Business. It took plenty of meaning away from the contest.

The mêlée went unseen, however, by Thornton. At the top of the hill his mind wandered momentarily to think about his beloved grandmother who died last year. Then he just put his head down and rode like stink.

It seemed this would not be enough, however, when the massive spectre of Strong Promise joined the leader on the

TOTE GOLD CUP

1. COOL DAWN (trained by R Alner)
2. Strong Promise (G Hubbard)
3. Dorans Pride (M Hourigan)
Also ran: 4th Senior El Battrail (33-1), 5th Sunny Bay (9-1), 6th Simply Dashing (33-1), 7th Challenger du Luc (25-1), 8th Barton Bank (33-1), 9th South Royal (100-1), 10th Yorkshire Oaks (100-1), 11th Go Ballistic (25-1).
Casualties - Pulled Up: Addington Boy (before 4 fences out) (25-1), Caught By Better (before last fence) (33-1), Cyborg (before 7th fence) (10-1), Carried Out: Indian Tracker (before 7th) (50-1), See More Business (before 7th) (11-2), Fell: Rough Quest (7th) (14-1).
17 min. won by 1 1/2 lengths, head, 14, 3, 4.

turn into the straight. Dorans Pride, the favourite from Ireland, had been creeping closer too, but he was never to get out of creeping gear.

Cool Dawn was to be no ice sculpture in the Cheltenham heat, though. He kept boxing to the line, and by the time he reached it he was a length and three-quarters ahead of Strong Promise. Dorans Pride finished well to be a further head behind.

For anyone who had seen Cool Dawn at Wincanton in November this would have been an eye-rubbing moment. That day, in the hands of Dido, he, in her words, "ran like a drain". Robert Alner steered himself to tell the owner she should not ride the horse again. "It was the hardest thing I had to do," he said. "I knew the horse was pretty good, and Dido's good in her own right, but not at this level."

That was Thornton's cue. It seemed most apt that a rider who had been once relegated himself should take the posting.

Andrew Thornton was a promising, if unglamorous, young rider in his native North-east. He is a tall man and rides with his stirrups so long that he could probably kick rabbits from horseback. This technique, he found, was not *de rigueur* when he moved to Upper Lambourn and Kim Bailey. He pulled "the pedals" up and his fortunes started going the other way.

"Riding too short just didn't work for me," he said. "I was just trying to fit in with the stylish way they did it down south. Basically I just wasn't being myself. I was just being stupid and I needed my head looking at."

One day, in November 1994, he knew the game was up. "I

dropped off this horse," he said. "He was in front but I just fell off him." By then the alliance with Bailey had ended, but at least Thornton decided to return to his natural style.

The simple approach has yielded great results this year. Thornton, at 25, won a King George VI Chase on Boxing Day (ironically on See More Business) and ignited his Festival on Wednesday with French Holly's victory.

Success will not go to Andrew Thornton's head though. Like Cool Dawn himself, there

is no ostentation about this athlete and he will continue to tread the path that has resurrected his career. "I'll be still going to the Hexhams and Pertins and Sedgfields," he said.

There is little pomp either about Alner. He will again be at the horsebox wheel this morning as he drives to the rather more prosaic Folkestone. He'll see Thornton there. It was all a rather appropriate, if unexpected, result in the end. The field had paraded before the race to the melody of "Fanfare For The Common Man".

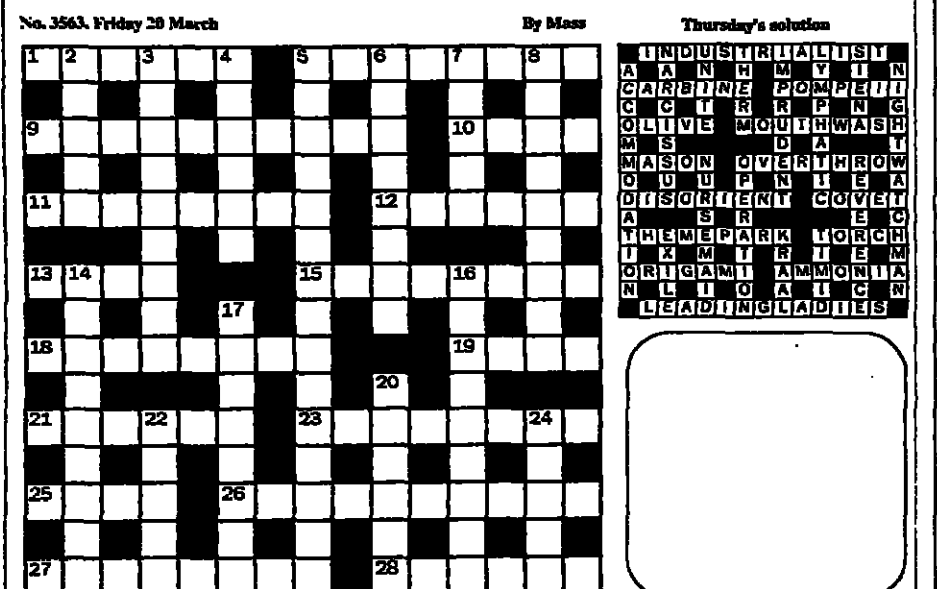
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- ACROSS**
- Devours ribs (6)
 - It's impertinent (out of order and line) in a girl (8)
 - Photographer's aid, snapping tree by lake during trip (10)
 - Tied man one released (4)
 - Chap, one working to squeeze North's contract (8)
 - Girl's cooler at first in the country (6)
 - Prize song, not second (4)
 - Female, following note, in consequence snarled (8)
 - Finest Ming? On reflection it's not China (3-5)
 - Grey's slow (4)
 - Feed, swigging measure of rough wallop (6)
 - A little Eastern book about a parrot (4-4)
 - Wretch facing Bishop check (4)
 - Dead dry and heated, maybe (10)
 - Produce rare results? Good in a loser... (8)
 - ... (one with every incentive to beat another) (6)
 - Small group with old instrument (5)
 - One you might associate with trolls? (9)
 - Most of the fruit's fit for a king (6)
- DOWN**
- Produce deed affecting completion? (2,2,3,5,3)
 - Beast mounted on a crest in a crypt (8)
 - Left port with full cargo (5)
 - Plant becomes rank weed in time (9)
 - A stretch on new track's thrown up change of tune (5-4)
 - Place for decanters a party exhausted, we hear? (9)
 - Turned up accompanied (8)
 - Fences put up to keep little Edward in (6)
 - Unhappy sacrificing Spade in card game (5)
 - Plants, non-British species (5)

Ferguson heats up hunt for Huckerby

Football

By Alan Nixon

ALEX FERGUSON, the Manchester United manager, is trying to bring Coventry City's coveted forward, Darren Huckerby, to Old Trafford in a £5m deal before the transfer deadline.

Huckerby is top of injury-hit United's wanted list to help their sagging attempt to retain the League title, and next Thursday is the transfer deadline. Ferguson has been given cash to spend by his chief executive, Martin Edwards, and the multi-talented attacker is the player he wants to add much-needed life to his forward line.

Huckerby destroyed United this season with his pace and unpredictable skills and Ferguson could do with his bubbling enthusiasm for the closing weeks of the campaign.

The former Newcastle United reserve can play down either wing or down the middle and is the kind of talent United lacked as they slipped out of Europe.

Huckerby would be a one-man forward line for Ferguson,

who has doubts over Paul Scholes and Ryan Giggs as he tries to beat off Arsenal for the championship.

The problem will be persuading the Coventry manager, Gordon Strachan, to sell. An earlier approach was rejected, but now Ferguson has to get his man. United have been in contact with Coventry who may be forced to move out Huckerby or Dion Dublin after their surprise FA Cup defeat by Sheffield United.

Rumours were rife that Huckerby was in Manchester yesterday discussing terms, but reliable Coventry sources revealed that he was at training in the Midlands. However, a deal could be done in the next week. Huckerby would certainly be interested in the glamour move if Coventry agree a price.

Coventry will want to tie down Dublin, a target for Blackburn, on a long-term contract before selling Huckerby. They could not risk losing both. Strachan has spent heavily on his club's record buy Viorel Moldovan and needs to recoup some cash. He also has a surplus of forwards.

Myth of Ferguson's

supermen, page 30

Gascoigne calls off £3m Boro transfer

PAUL GASCOIGNE has refused to leave Rangers to join Middlesbrough in a £3m transfer, writes Alan Nixon. The England midfielder has personally called off a deal to team up with Bryan Robson because he wants to see out the season in Scotland.

Gascoigne's snub to Boro will exasperate the Rangers chairman, David Murray, who set up the transfer a week after preparing a similar move to Crystal Palace. Murray is believed to be the driving force behind his departure, but the fans and the manager, Walter Smith, are happy for Gascoigne to stay for the rest of the season.

After lengthy talks with friends and Rangers staff yesterday, Gascoigne decided he would finish the campaign at Ibrox and told his agent, Mel Stein, to call off the transfer after both clubs announced they had agreed a price.

Now Gascoigne wants to get back into the Rangers team and help their fading hopes of winning a 10th successive title and the Scottish Cup as well as recovering his fitness and international place with England.